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FORERUNNERS AND RIVALS  
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# FORERUNNERS AND RIVALS OF CHRISTIANITY

BEING  
STUDIES IN RELIGIOUS HISTORY  
FROM 330 B.C. TO 330 A.D.

BY

F. LEGGE, F.S.A.

(Honorary) Foreign Secretary Society of Biblical Archaeology,  
Member of Council Royal Asiatic Society,  
Member of Committee Egypt Exploration Fund, &c.

"The ghosts of words and dusty dreams"

"Old memories, faiths infirm and dead"

SWINBURNE, *Felise*.

IN TWO VOLUMES

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## CHAPTER VII

### POST-CHRISTIAN Gnostics

It will be seen, from what has been said in the first volume, that, even at the beginning of the Christian era, there was no lack of *αἵρεσις* or choice of creeds offered to those peoples of the Levant who had outgrown their national religions; and it may be a surprise to many that more notice was not taken by the Christians of the Apostolic age of these early essays at a universal faith. Some writers, indeed, among whom Bishop Lightfoot is perhaps the most notable, have thought that they could detect allusions to them in the Canonical writings, and that by the "worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which man hath not seen, vainly puffed up by the understanding of his flesh<sup>1</sup>" which St Paul condemns in the Epistle to the Colossians, must be understood the teachings of Gnostic sects already in existence<sup>2</sup>. Others have gone further, and think that the Fourth Gospel was itself written under Gnostic influence<sup>3</sup>, and that the Apocalypse attributed to the same author vituperates under the name of the Nicolaitans a Christian sect professing Gnostic tenets<sup>4</sup>. Even if this be so, however, the comparatively late date assigned to all these documents<sup>5</sup> must prevent their being received as

<sup>1</sup> Col. ii. 18.

<sup>2</sup> Lightfoot, *St Paul's Epistle to the Colossians*, pp. 90 sqq.

<sup>3</sup> So A. Jülicher in *Encyc. Bibl. s.v. Gnosis*.

<sup>4</sup> Irenaeus, *op. cit.* Bk i. c. 23, p. 214, Harvey. Salmon in *Dict. of Christian Biog. s.v. Nicolaitans*, thinks this an idea peculiar to Irenaeus alone and not to be found in the older source from which he drew his account of the other Gnostics.

<sup>5</sup> The Canonical Apocalypse was probably written after the siege of Jerusalem by Titus in 70 A.D., while the first unmistakable mention we have of St John's Gospel is by Theophilus of Antioch a hundred years later. Earlier quotations from it are anonymous, *i.e.* they give the words of the Gospel as in the A.V. but without referring them to any specified author. See Duchesne, *Early Christian Church*, Eng. ed. pp. 102, 192.

evidence of what happened in the earliest stage of the Christian Church; and we find no proof that Gnosticism ever seriously competed for popular favour with orthodox Christianity until well into the II<sup>nd</sup> century<sup>1</sup>. That the first Christians would take little heed either of organized religions like that of the Alexandrian divinities, or of the speculations of the Orphic poets and of such sects as the Simonians is plain, when we consider the way in which their expectation of the Parusia or Second Coming dominated every moment of their lives<sup>2</sup>. They believed with the unquestioning faith of children that their dead Master would presently return to the earth, and that it would then be destroyed to make way for a new state of things in which, while the majority of mankind would be condemned to everlasting fire, His followers should taste all the joys of Paradise. With this before their eyes, they turned, as has been said, their possessions into a common fund<sup>3</sup>, they bound themselves together in a strict association for mutual help and comfort, and they set to work to sweep their fellows into the Christian fold with an earnestness and an energy that was the fiercer because the time for its exercise was thought to be so short. "The Lord is at hand and His reward," a saying which seems to have been a password among them<sup>4</sup>, was an idea never absent from their minds, and the result was an outburst of proselytism such as the world till then had never seen.

"They saw," says a writer who was under no temptation to exaggerate the charity and zeal of the primitive Church, "their fathers and mothers, their sisters and their dearest friends, hurrying onward to that fearful pit, laughing and singing, lured on by the fiends whom they called the gods. They felt as we should feel were we to see a blind man walking towards a river bank.... Who that could hope to save a soul by tears and supplications would remain quiescent

<sup>1</sup> Hegesippus, quoted by Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.* Bk iv. c. 22, says that the Church was untroubled by heresy until the reign of Trajan.

<sup>2</sup> Hegesippus (see last note) in his account of the martyrdom of "James the Brother of the Lord," *op. cit.* Bk ii. c. 23.

<sup>3</sup> See Schmiedel, *Encyc. Bibl.* s.v. Community of Goods. Cf. Lucian, *de Mort. Peregrini*, c. XIII, and Mozley's comments in *Dict. Christian Biog.* s.v. Lucianus.

<sup>4</sup> *Maran atha*. See *Epistle of Barnabas*, c. XXI.

as men do now?....In that age every Christian was a missionary. The soldier sought to win recruits for the heavenly host; the prisoner of war discoursed to his Persian jailer; the slave girl whispered the gospel in the ears of her mistress as she built up the mass of towered hair; there stood men in cloak and beard at street corners who, when the people, according to the manners of the day, invited them to speak, preached, not the doctrines of the Painted Porch, but the words of a new and strange philosophy; the young wife threw her arms round her husband's neck and made him agree to be baptised, that their souls might not be parted after death<sup>1</sup>...."

How could people thus preoccupied be expected to concern themselves with theories of the origin of a world about to perish, or with the philosophic belief that all the gods of the nations were but varying forms of one supreme and kindly power?

Before the end of the 1st century, however, this belief in the immediate nearness of the Second Coming had died away<sup>2</sup>. The promise that the second Gospel puts into the mouth of Jesus that some of His hearers should not taste of death until they saw the Son of Man come with power<sup>3</sup>, had become incapable of fulfilment by the death of the last of those who had listened to Him. Nor were all the converts to the faith which His immediate disciples had left behind them possessed with the same simple faith and mental equipment as themselves<sup>4</sup>. To the poor fishermen and peasants of Judaea had succeeded the slaves and freedmen of great houses—including even Caesar's own,—some of them professionally versed in the philosophy of the time, and all with a greater or less acquaintance with the religious beliefs of the non-Jewish citizens of the great Roman Empire<sup>5</sup>. The preachings and journeys of St Paul and other missionaries had also brought into the Christian Church many believers of other than Jewish blood, together with the foreign

<sup>1</sup> Winwood Reade, *op. cit.* pp. 237 *sqq.*

<sup>2</sup> Eugène de Faye, "Formation d'une Doctrine de Dieu au III<sup>e</sup> Siècle," *R.H.R.* t. LXXX. (1911), p. 9. He quotes Harnack in his support.

<sup>3</sup> Mark xi. 1.

<sup>4</sup> On the ignorance of the first Christian writers, see de Faye, *op. cit.* p. 4.

<sup>5</sup> Origen, *cont. Celsum*, Bk III. c. 12. Cf. Krüger, *La Grande Encyclopédie*, Paris, s.v. Gnosticisme.

merchants and members of the Jewish communities scattered throughout the Roman world, who were better able than the Jews of Palestine to appreciate the stability and the organized strength of the Roman Empire and to desire an alliance with it. To ask such men, deeply engaged as many of them were in the pursuit of wealth, to join in the temporary communism and other-worldliness practised by the first Christian Church would have been as futile as to expect the great Jewish banking-houses of the present day to sell all that they have and give it to the poor.

Another cause that profoundly altered the views of the early Christian communities must have been the catastrophe and final dispersion of the Jewish nation. Up to the time of the destruction of the Temple of Jerusalem under Titus, the Christians not only regarded themselves as Jews<sup>1</sup>, but were looked upon by such of the other subjects of Rome as had happened to have heard of them, as merely one sect the more of a race always factious and given to internal dissensions. Yet even in St Paul's time, the Christians were exposed to a bitter persecution at the hands of those orthodox Jews who seemed to the Gentile world to be their co-religionists<sup>2</sup>, and it is probable that in the outbreak of fanaticism attending the first Jewish war, they suffered severely at the hands of both combatants<sup>3</sup>. The burning of the Temple must also have been a crushing blow to all who looked for a literal and immediate fulfilment of the

<sup>1</sup> "Those which say they are Jews, but are not"; Rev. ii. 9; *ibid.* iii. 9. The *Clementine Homilies*, though of much later date, never speak of the Christians otherwise than as Jews. Cf. Duchesne, *Early Christian Church*, p. 12.

<sup>2</sup> Acts viii. 1.

<sup>3</sup> Renan (*L'Antéchrist*, p. 511, and note 1) gives a passage, which he thinks is from Tacitus, showing that Titus aimed at the suppression of the Christians as well as the Jews. Doubtless many Christians perished in the punitive measures taken in the 1st century against the Jews in Antioch and elsewhere. Cf. Josephus, *Wars of the Jews*, Bk vii. c. 3; Eusebius, *H. E.* Bk iii. cc. 12, 17, 19, 20. It was the persecution by the fanatical Jews that compelled the flight of the Christians to Pella shortly before the siege. See Eusebius, Bk iii. c. 5; Epiph. *Haer.* xxix. c. 7, p. 239, Oehler. The episode of the "Woman clothed with the Sun" of the Canonical Apocalypse is supposed by some to refer to this.

Messianic hope, and its result was to further accentuate the difference between the Christians and the Jews<sup>1</sup>. Moreover, the hatred and scorn felt by these last for all other members of the human race had now been recognized by the Gentiles<sup>2</sup>, and the repeated insurrections attempted by the Jews between the time of Titus and the final war of extermination under Hadrian showed that these feelings were shared by the Jewish communities outside Palestine<sup>3</sup>. It was therefore not at all the time which worldly-wise and prudent men, as many of the later Christian converts were, would choose for identifying themselves with a race which not only repudiated the relationship in the most practical way, but had lately exposed themselves on other grounds to the deserved execration of the civilized world.

It is, then, by no means surprising that some of the new converts should have begun to look about them for some compromise between their recently acquired convictions and the religious beliefs of the Graeco-Roman world in which they had been brought up, and they found this ready to their hand in the pre-Christian sects which we have ventured above to class together under the generic name of Gnostic. In the Orphic poems, they found the doctrine of successive ages of the world, each with its different characteristics, which coincided well enough with the repeated declaration of the Christians that the old world was passing away,—as was indeed the fact

<sup>1</sup> So that the members of the little Church of Pella who retained the name of Jews gradually ceased to be regarded as orthodox by the other Christian communities and were called Ebionites. See Renan, *L'Antéchrist*, p. 548. Cf. Fuller in *Dict. Christian Biog. s.v.* Ebionites for authorities. The connection that Fuller would find between the Essenes and the Ebionites seems to rest on little proof.

<sup>2</sup> Thus Mgr Duchesne, *op. cit.* p. 14, says that "St Paul was a Jew by birth, imbued with the exclusiveness and disdainful spirit which inspired his race and influenced all their dealings with other nations."

<sup>3</sup> Many of the Sicarii and other fanatics managed to escape before the catastrophe of the First Jewish War to Egypt and the Cyrenaica, where they continued to commit outrages and make rebellion until they brought on themselves and their co-religionists the wrath of the Romans. See Josephus, *Wars*, Bk VII. cc. 10, 11. Cf. Renan, *L'Antéchrist*, p. 539; *id.*, *Les Évangiles*, p. 369.

since the conquests of Alexander<sup>1</sup>. They found, too, both in the Orphic poems and in the mixed religions like that of the Alexandrian divinities which had sprung from the doctrines taught by these poems, the legend of a god dying and rising again for the salvation of mankind told in a way which had many analogies with the Gospel narratives of the Passion and Resurrection of Jesus<sup>2</sup>. Among the Essenes, too, who may have owed, as has been said above, some of their doctrines to Orphic inspiration, they found all the modest virtues of sobriety, chastity, and mutual help which had already distinguished the Christian Church above all the other religious associations of the time. And among both the Orphics and the Essenes was to be noticed the strained and fanciful system of interpretation by allegory and figure which enabled them to put their own construction upon the words not only of the books of the Jewish Canon, but of those writings which had begun to circulate among the scattered Christian communities as containing the authentic teaching of Jesus and His immediate disciples<sup>3</sup>. Add to this that the Simonians, and no doubt other pre-Christian Gnostic sects of which we have lost all trace, had already shown the mixed populations of the Levant how to reconcile the innovations of a teacher of impressive and commanding personality with their own ancestral traditions<sup>4</sup>, and that the many mysteries then diffused throughout the ancient world

<sup>1</sup> Abel's *Orphica*, Frgs. 243-248, especially the quotation from Nigidius.

<sup>2</sup> See Chapter II, *supra*.

<sup>3</sup> So Renan, *L'Antéchrist*, p. 300, says that the Synoptic Gospels probably first took shape in the Church at Pella. Thus he explains the so-called "little Apocalypse" of Matthew xxiv., Mark xiii., and Luke xxi. Cf. *ibid.*, p. 296 and note. For the symbolic construction placed upon them by the Gnostics, see Hatch, *H. L.*, p. 75.

<sup>4</sup> Hegesippus, who probably wrote about 150 A.D., speaks of Thebuthis, Dositheus, and others as leaders of early sects. Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.* Bk. iv. c. 22, and Origen (*cont. Cels.* Bk. vi. c. 11) make this last a contemporary of Simon Magus. The *Clementine Homilies* (Bk. ii. c. 24), from whom both authors may have derived their information, have a long story about Dositheus being with Simon a follower of John the Baptist, and disputing with Simon the headship of the sect. From presumably other sources, Hegesippus speaks of the Essenes, the Masbotheans and the Hemerobaptists, for which last see Chapter XIII, *infra*, as pre-Christian sects.

offered a ready means of propagating new doctrines under cover of secrecy ; and it will be seen that most of the sources from which the founders of the great post-Christian sects afterwards drew their systems were then lying open and ready to hand.

The prize which awaited success was, moreover, no mean one. It is sometimes said that the only distinction that awaited a leader of the Church at this time was the distinction of being burned alive<sup>1</sup>. Yet the fear of impeachment to be followed by a still more horrible death never prevented English statesmen in the xviii<sup>th</sup> century from struggling with each other for place and power ; while the State had not as yet made any serious attempt to suppress the propagation of Christianity by force. On the other hand, a Christian bishop, even at this early date, occupied a position which was really superior to that of most functionaries of the secular State. Gifted with almost complete power over his flock in temporal as well as in spiritual matters, he was at once their judge and their adviser ; and, so long as there were Pagan emperors on the throne, the faithful were forbidden to come to any tribunal but his<sup>2</sup>. His judgments, too, had a greater sanction than those of any temporal judge ; for while he could not indeed lawfully condemn any of his hearers to death, he had in the sentence of excommunication which he alone could pronounce, the power of cutting them off from eternal life. The adoration with which he was regarded by them also surpassed the respect paid to proconsul or legate<sup>3</sup> ; and the literature of the time is full of allusions to the way in which, when brought before the temporal rulers, he was attended

<sup>1</sup> Winwood Reade, *op. cit.* p. 244. Probably this is what is meant by Gibbon when he says (*Decline and Fall*, Bury's ed. III. p. 153, n. 54) that no future bishop of Avila is likely to imitate Priscillian by turning heretic, because the income of the see is 20,000 ducats a year.

<sup>2</sup> *Apostolical Constitutions*, Bk II. cc. 45, 46, 47. Harnack, *Expansion of Christianity*, Eng. ed. II. p. 98 n. 1, gives the date of this work as "middle of the 2nd century." Duchesne, *op. cit.* p. 109, thinks it is derived from the *Didache* which he puts not later than Trajan.

<sup>3</sup> *Apost. Const.* Bk II. c. 26 : "He (i.e. the bishop) is your ruler and governor ; he is your king and potentate ; he is next after God, your earthly divinity, who has a right to be honoured by you."

by weeping multitudes who crowded round him even in prison, imploring his blessing and kissing his fetters<sup>1</sup>. Hence it is not to be wondered at that such a position was eagerly sought after, that envy of the episcopate was the principal sin against which the Christian writers of the sub-Apostolic age warned their readers<sup>2</sup>, and that it is to the disappointment at failing to attain the highest places in the orthodox Church that they ascribe the foundation of all the principal post-Christian sects<sup>3</sup>. Without taking this accusation as literally correct, it is plain that the chance of irresponsible power over those whom they could convince must have proved a most alluring bait to religious-minded persons who were also ambitious and intellectual men of the world<sup>4</sup>.

Thus it came about that during the II<sup>nd</sup> and III<sup>rd</sup> centuries, there arose more than one teacher who set himself to construct a system which should enable its votaries to retain the Hellenistic culture which Alexander's conquests had spread throughout the whole civilized world with the religious and moral ideas which the enthusiasm and energy of the first Christians had begun to diffuse among the lower classes of citizens<sup>5</sup>. Alexandria, the natural meeting-place between the East and West, was no

<sup>1</sup> Lucian, *Proteus Peregrinus*, *passim*; *Acts of Paul and Thekla*; *Acts of Peter of Alexandria*.

<sup>2</sup> Clement of Rome, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, c. 44.

<sup>3</sup> So Irenaeus, *op. cit.* Bk I. c. 26, pp. 219, 220, Harvey, says it was the desire to become a διδάσκαλος or teacher that drove Tatian, once a hearer of Justin Martyr's, into heresy. Hegesippus, *ubi cit. supra*, says that Thebuthis first corrupted the Church, on account of his not being made a bishop. For the same accusation in the cases of Valentinus and Marcion, see Chapters IX and XI, *infra*.

<sup>4</sup> Celsus *apud* Origen (*op. cit.* Bk III. cc. 10, 11) says: "Christians at first were few in number, and all held like opinions, but when they increased to a great multitude, they were divided and separated, each wishing to have his own individual party; for this was their object from the beginning"—a contention which Origen rebuts.

<sup>5</sup> Thus in Egypt it was almost exclusively the lower classes which embraced Christianity at the outset. See Amélineau, "Les Actes Coptes du martyre de St Polycarpe" in *P.S.B.A.* vol. x. (1888), p. 392. Julian (*Cyr.* vi. p. 206) says that under Tiberius and Claudius there were no converts of rank.



doubt the scene of the first of these attempts, and the writings of Philo, fortunately still extant, had already shown the way in which the allegorical system of interpretation could be used to this end. That many of the founders of post-Christian Gnostic sects were Alexandrian Jews is the constant tradition of the Christian Church, and is antecedently probable enough<sup>1</sup>. But other Gnostic leaders were certainly not Alexandrians and came from centres sufficiently distant from Egypt to show that the phenomenon was very widely spread, and that the same causes produced the same results in the most distant places and entirely outside the Jewish community. Marcion, the founder of the Marcionite Church, was a native of Pontus. Saturnilus or Saturninus—the name is spelt differently by Irenaeus and Hippolytus—came from Antioch, Theodotus from Byzantium, others, such as Cerdo, and probably Prepon the Syrian, began teaching in Rome, while we hear of a certain Monoimus, who is said to have been an Arab<sup>2</sup>. Most of these are to us merely names, only very brief summaries of the different systems founded or professed by them having been preserved in the heresiologies compiled by the Fathers of the Church both before and immediately after the alliance of the Christian Church with the Roman State under Constantine.

<sup>1</sup> Thus Cerinthus, who is made by tradition the opponent of St John, is said to have been a Jew and to have been trained in the doctrines of Philo at Alexandria (Theodoret, *Haer. Fab.* Bk II. § 3). Cf. Neander, *Ch. Hist.* (Eng. ed.) vol. II. pp. 42–47. Neander says the same thing about Basilides (*op. cit.* p. 47 and note) and Valentinus (p. 71), although it is difficult to discover any authority for the statement other than the Jewish features in their doctrines. There is more evidence for the statement regarding Marcus, the heresiarch and magician whom Irenaeus (*op. cit.* Bk I. c. 7) accuses of the seduction of Christian women, apparently in his own time, since the words of Marcus' ritual, which the Bishop of Lyons quotes, are in much corrupted Hebrew, and the Jewish Cabala was used by him. Renan's view (*Marc Aurèle*, pp. 139 *sqq.*) that Christianity in Egypt never passed through the Judaeo-Christian stage may in part account for the desire of Jewish converts there to set up schools of their own.

<sup>2</sup> For Marcion, see Chapter XI, *infra*. Summary accounts of the doctrines of other Gnostics mentioned are given by Irenaeus and Hippolytus in the works quoted. See also the *Dict. of Christian Biog.*, under their respective names.

Of these treatises, the two, which, up to about sixty years ago, formed our main sources of information with regard to the Gnostics of the sub-Apostolic age<sup>1</sup>, are the writings of St Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyons about the year 177 A.D., and of Epiphanius, Bishop of Constantia in Cyprus, who tells us he wrote in the seventh year of Gratian or 374 A.D. The first of these is considerably later in date than the heresiarchs in refutation of whose doctrines he wrote his five books "against Heresies"; and although he is most probably honest in his account of their tenets, it is evident that Irenaeus was incapable of distinguishing between the opinions of the founders of the sects which he controverts and those of their followers and successors. Epiphanius, on the other hand, wrote when the Catholic Church was already triumphant, and his principal object seems to have been to blacken the memory of those competitors whom she had already outdistanced in the race for popularity and power. Hence he spares no pains to rake together every story which theological hatred and unclean imagination had ever invented against her opponents and rivals; while his contempt for consistency and the rules of evidence show the intellectual depths to which the war which orthodox Christianity had from the first waged against Hellenistic culture had reduced the learning of the age. The language in which he and the other Catholic writers on heresy describe the Gnostics is, indeed, the first and most salient instance of that intolerance for any other opinions than their own, which a recent writer of great authority declares the Apostles and their successors derived from their Jewish nationality<sup>2</sup>. "The first-born of Satan," "seducers of women," "savage beasts," "scorpions," "ravening wolves," "demoniacs," "sorcerers," and "atheists" were the mildest terms in

<sup>1</sup> The lesser heresiologists, such as Philaster of Brescia, St Augustine, the writer who is known as Praedestinatus, the author of the tract *Adversus omnes Haereses* wrongly ascribed to Tertullian, and the other writers included in the first volume of Oehler's *Corpus Haeresiologicum*, Berlin, 1856, as well as writers like Eusebius, all copy from one or other of these sources. The *Excerpta Theodoti* appended to the works of Clement of Alexandria are on a different footing, but their effect at the time spoken of in the text was not appreciated. Cf. Salmon in *Dict. Christian Biog. s.v. Valentinus*.

<sup>2</sup> Bouché-Leclercq, *L'Intolérance Religieuse et Politique*, Paris, 1912, p. 140.

which Epiphanius and his fellow heresiologists can bring themselves to speak of the sectaries. They afford ample justification for the remark of the philosophic Emperor Julian that "no wild beasts are so hostile to men as Christian sects in general are to one another<sup>1</sup>."

From this lack of trustworthy evidence, the discovery in 1842 at a convent on Mt Athos of eight out of the ten books of the *Philosophumena* now generally attributed to Hippolytus, Bishop of "Portus Romana" in 230 A.D.<sup>2</sup>, seemed likely to deliver us. The work thus recovered bore the title of the *Refutation of all Heresies*, and did succeed in giving us a fairly clear and coherent account of some twenty Gnostic sects, the very existence of many of which was previously unknown to us. Moreover, it went a good way beyond its predecessors in pointing out that the real origin of all the heretical sects then existing was to be found, not so much in the diabolic inspiration which other writers thought sufficient to account for it, as in the Pythagorean, Platonic, and other philosophies then in vogue, together with the practice of astrology and magic rites which had come to form an important part of all the Pagan religions then popular. It also showed a very extensive and apparently first-hand acquaintance with the works of the Gnostic leaders, and the lengthy quotations which it gives from their writings enable us to form a better idea than we had before been able to do both of what the Gnostic tenets really were and of the arguments by which they were propagated. Unfortunately the text of the *Philosophumena* has not been able to withstand the assaults of those textual critics who have already reduced the Book of Genesis to a patchwork of several authors writing at widely separate times and places, and writers like Dr Salmon and Prof. Stähelin have laboured to show that the author of the *Philosophumena* was taken in by a forger who had himself concocted all the documents which Hippolytus quotes as being

<sup>1</sup> Ammianus Marcellinus, Bk xxii. c. 5, § 4.

<sup>2</sup> An excellent and concise account of the discovery and the subsequent controversy as to the authorship of the book is given by Salmon in the *Dict. Christian Biog. s.v. Hippolytus Romanus*. For Mgr Duchesne's theory that Hippolytus was a schismatic Pope, see his *Hist. Christian Church*, pp. 227-233.

the work of different heresiarchs<sup>1</sup>. Their conclusions, although they do not seem to put the matter entirely beyond doubt, have been accepted by many theological writers, especially in Germany, and in the course of the discussion the fact has emerged that the documents quoted can hardly go back to an earlier date than the year 200 A.D.<sup>2</sup> It is therefore unlikely that Hippolytus had before him the actual words of the heresiarchs whom he is endeavouring to refute; and if the *Philosophumena* were all we had to depend upon, we might despair of knowing what "the great Gnostics of Hadrian's time" really taught.

The reason for this paucity of documents is also plain enough. "The antidote to the scorpion's bite," to use a patristic figure of speech<sup>3</sup>, was felt by the early Church to be the actual cautery, and its leaders spared no pains to rout out and burn the writings of the heretics pending the time when they could apply the same treatment to their authors. Even before their alliance with Constantine had put the resources of the State at their disposal, they had contrived to use the secular arm for this purpose. In several persecutions, notably that of Diocletian, which was probably the most severe of them all, the Christian scriptures were particularly sought for by the Inquisitors of the State, and many of the orthodox boasted that they had arranged that the police should find the writings of the heretics in their stead<sup>4</sup>. Later, when it came to the turn of the Christians to dictate imperial edicts, the possession of heretical writings was made punishable with severe penalties<sup>5</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Salmon's position is set out by him in *Hermathena*, Dublin, 1885, pp. 389 *sqq.* For Stähelin's, see his tractate *Die Gnostische Quellen Hippolyts*, Leipzig, 1890, in Harnack's *Texte und Untersuchungen*. Both are skilfully summarized by de Faye in his *Introduction à l'Étude du Gnosticisme*, Paris, 1903, pp. 25 *sqq.*

<sup>2</sup> De Faye does not accept Stähelin's contention as to the forgery, but his conclusion as to the date is as stated in the text. See *Introduction*, etc. pp. 68, 71.

<sup>3</sup> Tertullian, *Scorpiace*, c. 1.

<sup>4</sup> Neander, *Ch. Hist.* (Eng. ed.), i. p. 208, quotes a case from St Augustine which I have not been able to verify.

<sup>5</sup> Gibbon, *Decline and Fall*, II. p. 110 and note 144 (Bury's ed.). For the search which the Christian emperors directed to be made for the heretics' books, see Eusebius, *Vita Constantini*, Bk III. cc. 64, 65.

Between orthodox Christian and Pagan it is a wonder that any have survived to us.

A lucky chance, however, has prevented us from being entirely ignorant of what the Gnostics had to say for themselves. In 1851, a MS. which had been known to be in the British Museum since 1778, was published with a translation into a curious mixture of Latin and Greek by the learned Petermann, and turned out to include a sort of Gospel coming from some early Gnostic sect<sup>1</sup>. From a note made on it by a writer who seems to have been nearly contemporary with its scribes, it is known as *Pistis Sophia* or "*Faith-Wisdom*"; and the same MS. also contains fragments of other works coming from a cognate source. In 1891, a papyrus in the Bodleian Library at Oxford, which had been brought into this country in 1769 by the traveller Bruce, was also published with a French translation by M. Amélineau, an ex-Abbé who has long made the later Egyptian language his peculiar study, and proved to contain two documents connected with the system disclosed in the *Pistis Sophia*<sup>2</sup>. Both MSS. are in Coptic of the dialect of the Sahid or Upper Egypt, to which fact they probably owe their escape from the notice of the Byzantine Inquisitors; and they purport to contain revelations as to the next world and the means of attaining salvation therein made by Jesus on His return to earth after the Resurrection. Although these several documents were evidently not all written at one time and place, and cannot be assigned to a single author, the notes and

<sup>1</sup> The actual transcription and translation were made by Maurice Schwartze, a young German who was sent over here to study the documents in the British Museum at the expense of the King of Prussia. He died after the completion of his task, and before the book could be printed.

<sup>2</sup> Amélineau's transcription and translation appeared in the *Notices et Extraits*, etc. of the Académie des Inscriptions, t. xxix. pt 2 (Paris, 1891). He has also published a translation into French without text of the *Pistis Sophia* (Paris, 1895). Dr Carl Schmidt, of the University of Berlin, has published translations into German of both works under the title *Koptisch-Gnostische Schriften*, Bd I., Leipzig, 1905. None of these versions are entirely satisfactory, and it is much to be wished that an authoritative edition of the two works could be put forward by English scholars. The present writer gave a short history and analysis of them in the *Scottish Review* for 1893 under the title "Some Heretic Gospels."

emendations appearing on the MSS. show that most of them must have been in the possession of members of the same school as their composers; and that therefore we have here for the first time direct and authentic evidence of the Gnostic tenets, as put forward by their adherents instead of by their opponents.

The collation of these documents with the excerpts from other Gnostic writings appearing in early writers like Clement of Alexandria who were not professed heresiologists<sup>1</sup>, shows that the post-Christian Gnostic sects had more opinions in common than would be gathered from the statements of St Irenaeus, Hippolytus, and Epiphanius, and that they probably fulfilled a real want of the age<sup>2</sup>. All of them seem to have held that there was one Supreme Being, the source of all good, and that matter was inherently malignant and opposed to him. All of them, too, seem to have taught the perfectibility of man's nature, the salvation of at any rate the majority of mankind, and the possibility of their rising in the scale of being; and all of them held that this was to be effected mainly by means of certain mysteries or sacramental rites which were assumed to have a magical efficacy. All these fundamental characteristics find their origin in the beliefs of the pre-Christian religions and religious associations described above, and doubtless owed much to their influence. But with these, there was now combined for the first time the recognition of the divinity of One who, while appearing upon earth as a man among men,

<sup>1</sup> Clement was so far from being a heresiologist that he has not escaped the reproach of being himself a heretic. He repeatedly speaks in praise of the "true Gnostic," meaning thereby the perfect Christian, and although this is probably a mere matter of words, it seems to have induced Photius in the ixth century to examine his writings with a jealous eye. The result was that, as M. Courdaveaux points out (*R.H.R.* 1892, p. 293 and note), he found him guilty of teaching that matter was eternal, the Son a simple creature of the Father, the Incarnation only an appearance, that man's soul entered several bodies in succession, and that several worlds were created before that of Adam. All these are Gnostic opinions, and it may be that if we had all Clement's books in our hands, as had Photius, we might confirm M. Courdaveaux's judgment, as does apparently Mgr Duchesne. Cf. his *Hist. of Christian Ch.* pp. 244, 245.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. A. C. McGiffert, *Prolegomena to the Church History of Eusebius* (Schaff and Wace's Nicene Library), Oxford, 1890, vol. i. p. 179 and note.

was yet thought by all to be endowed with a greater share of the Divine nature than they. Orpheus, Moses, Homer, and the Jewish prophets had in turn been claimed as religious teachers who were divinely inspired; but Jesus was asserted by every later Gnostic school of whose teachings we have any evidence to have been Himself of higher essence and substance than the rest of mankind<sup>1</sup>. How far this assertion was dictated by the necessity for finding a superhuman authority for the revelation which each Gnostic leader professed to make to his disciples may be open to question; but in view of some contemporary controversies it is well to draw attention to the fact that the Divinity in some shape or other of Jesus, as well as what is now called His "historicity," was never for a moment called in question during the first three centuries by Gnostic or Catholic. *Μονογενής* or *Monogenes*<sup>2</sup>—a word which Catholic writers later confused with *Μονογεννητός* or "only-begotten," but which is best represented by the corresponding Latin expression *unicus* or "unique" (*i.e.* one of a kind)—is the word in which the Gnostics summed up their conceptions of the nature of Jesus<sup>3</sup>.

This belief, however, led to consequences which do not at first sight seem to follow from it. The gods of classical antiquity were indeed supposed to be of like passions with ourselves, and the Greek of Homer's time never thought it shame to attribute to them jealousy or lust or fear or vanity or any other of the weaknesses which afflict us<sup>4</sup>. But the one feature besides their beauty that distinguished the Greek gods from humanity was

<sup>1</sup> Of the heresies mentioned in the *Philosophumena* only two, viz. that of Simon Magus and that of those whom Hippolytus calls the Sethiani, do not admit, either expressly or by implication, the divinity of Jesus. This may be accounted for by what has been said above as to both being pre-Christian in origin.

<sup>2</sup> *E.g.* Irenaeus, *op. cit.* Bk I. c. I, i. p. 9, Harvey. Here he is called *ὅμοιος τε καὶ ἴσος τῷ προβαλόντι*, "like and equal to him who had sent him forth." There is certainly here no allusion to "begetting" in the ordinary sense of the word.

<sup>3</sup> As in the epithet of Persephone in the Orphic Hymn quoted above. See Chapter IV, *supra*. The unanimity with which all post-Christian Gnostics accepted the superhuman nature of Jesus seems to have struck Harnack. See his *What is Christianity?* Eng. ed. 1904, pp. 209, 210.

<sup>4</sup> *Iliad* I. II. 560 *sqq.*; IV. II. 57, 330; XIV. II. 320 *sqq.*

their immortality or freedom from death; and if demigods like Heracles were said to have gone through the common experience of mortals, this was held as proof that their apotheosis or deification did not take place until they had left the earth<sup>1</sup>. So much was this the case that the Greeks are said to have been much amused when they first beheld the Egyptians wailing for the death of Osiris, declaring that if he were a god he could not be dead, while if he were not, his death was not to be lamented<sup>2</sup>; and Plutarch, when repeating the story to his countrymen, thought it necessary to explain that in his view the protagonists in the Osiris and Set legend were neither gods nor men, but "great powers" or daemons not yet deified and in the meantime occupying a place between the two<sup>3</sup>. The same difficulty was, perhaps, less felt by the other Mediterranean peoples, among whom, as we have seen, the idea of a god who died and rose again was familiar enough<sup>4</sup>; but the Gnostic leaders must always have had before their eyes the necessity of making Christianity acceptable to persons in possession of that Hellenistic culture which then dominated the world, and which still forms the root of all modern civilization. How, then, were they to account for the fact that their God Jesus, whether they considered Him as the Logos or Word of Philo, or the Monogenes or Unique Power of the Supreme Being, had suffered a shameful death by sentence of the Roman procurator in Judaea?

The many different answers that they gave to this question showed more eloquently than anything else the difficulties with which it was surrounded. Simon, according to Hippolytus, said that Jesus only appeared on earth as a man, but was not really one, and seemed to have suffered in Judaea, although he had not really done so<sup>5</sup>. Basilides the Egyptian, the leader

<sup>1</sup> *Odyssey* xi. ll. 600 *sqq.*; Plutarch, *Life of Pelopidas*, c. xvi.

<sup>2</sup> Plutarch, *de Is. et Os.* c. LXXI.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* cc. xxv., xxvii., xxx.

<sup>4</sup> Probably this was one of the reasons why the Mysteries which showed the death of a god had in Greece to be celebrated in secret. See Diodorus' remark (Bk v. c. 77, § 3) that the things which the Greeks only handed down in secret were by the Cretans concealed from no one.

<sup>5</sup> Hippolytus, *op. cit.* Bk vi. c. 19, p. 265, Cruice.



of another sect, held, according to Irenaeus, that the body of Jesus was a phantasm and had no real existence, Simon of Cyrene having been crucified in his stead<sup>1</sup>; while Hippolytus, who seems to have drawn his account of Basilides' teaching from a different source from that used by his predecessor, makes him say that only the body of Jesus suffered and relapsed into "formlessness<sup>2</sup>," but that His soul returned into the different worlds whence it was drawn. Saturninus, another heresiarch, held, according to both authors, to the phantasmal theory of Jesus' body, which attained such popularity among other Gnostic sects that "Docetism," as the opinion was called, came to be looked upon by later writers as one of the marks of heresy<sup>3</sup>, and Hippolytus imagines that there were in existence sects who attached such importance to this point that they called themselves simply Docetics<sup>4</sup>. Valentinus, from whose teaching, as we shall see, the principal system of the *Pistis Sophia* was probably derived, also adhered to this Docetic theory, and said that the body of Jesus was not made of human flesh, but was constructed "with unspeakable art" so as to resemble it, the dove-like form which had descended into it at His baptism leaving it before the Crucifixion<sup>5</sup>. According to Irenaeus, too, Valentinus held that the Passion of Jesus was not intended as an atonement or sacrifice for sin, as the Catholics taught, but merely as a symbol or reflection of something that was taking place in the bosom of the Godhead<sup>6</sup>.

Another point in which the chief post-Christian Gnostic sects seem to have resembled one another is the secrecy with which their teachings were surrounded. Following strictly the practice of the various mysteries—the Eleusinian, the Isiac, Cabiric, and others—in which the Mediterranean god, whether called Dionysos, Osiris, Attis, Adonis, or by any other name, was worshipped, none were admitted to a knowledge of their doctrines without

<sup>1</sup> Irenaeus, *op. cit.* Bk I. c. 19, II. p. 200, Harvey.

<sup>2</sup> ἀμορφία. Hippolytus, *op. cit.* Bk VII. c. 27, p. 366, Cruice.

<sup>3</sup> Irenaeus, *op. cit.* Bk I. c. 18, p. 197, Harvey. Hippolytus, *op. cit.* Bk VII. c. 28, p. 368, Cruice.

<sup>4</sup> Hippolytus, *op. cit.* Bk VIII. c. 8.

<sup>5</sup> Irenaeus, *op. cit.* Bk I. c. 1, § 13, pp. cxli and 61, Harvey.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.* Bk I. c. 1, § 31, pp. cxli and 62, Harvey.

undergoing a long, arduous, and expensive course of initiation. More than one Gnostic teacher is said to have told his hearers to conceal from men what they were, or in other words not to let it be known that they were affiliated to the sect<sup>1</sup>, and all the Fathers bear witness to the way in which in time of persecution the Gnostics escaped by professing any faith that would satisfy the Roman authorities. By doing so, they laid themselves open to the accusation hurled at them with great virulence by the Church, that their secret rites and doctrines were so filthy as to shock human nature if made public—an accusation which at the first appearance of Christianity had been brought against the Catholics, and which the Church has ever since made use of against any sect which has differed from her, repeating it even at the present day against the Jews and the Freemasons<sup>2</sup>. There is, however, no reason why the accusation should be better founded in one case than in the others; and it is plain in any event that the practice of secrecy when expedient followed directly from the magical ideas which have been shown above to be the foundation of the dogmas of all the pre-Christian Gnostics, besides permeating religions like that of the Alexandrian divinities. The willingness of the post-Christian Gnostics to subscribe to any public profession of faith that might be convenient was no doubt due to the same cause<sup>3</sup>. As has been well said, to the true Gnostic, Paganism, Christianity, and Mahomedanism are merely veils<sup>4</sup>. The secret words and formulas delivered, and the secret rites which the initiate alone knows, are all that is necessary to assure him a distinguished place in the next world; and, armed with these,

<sup>1</sup> Irenaeus, *op. cit.* Bk I. c. 19, § 3, p. 202, Harvey; Hippolytus, *op. cit.* Bk IV. c. 24, p. 225, Cruice; Tertullian, *Scorpiace*, c. I.

<sup>2</sup> For the accusation against the Christians, see Athenagoras, *Apologia*, cc. III., xxxi. Justin Martyr, *First Apol.* c. xxvi. For that against the Jews, Strack, *Le Sang et la fausse Accusation du Meurtre Rituel*, Paris, 1893. For that against the Freemasons, "Devil Worship and Freemasonry," *Contemporary Review* for 1896.

<sup>3</sup> See n. 1, *supra*. So Eusebius speaks of the Simonians receiving baptism and slipping into the Church without revealing their secret tenets, *Hist. Eccl.* Bk II. c. 1.

<sup>4</sup> Revillout, *Vie et Sentences de Secundus*, Paris, 1873, p. 3, n. 1.

he can contemplate with perfect indifference all outward forms of worship.

These and other points which the post-Christian Gnostic sects seem to have had in common<sup>1</sup> can therefore be accounted for by their common origin, without accepting the theory of the textual critics that the Fathers had been deceived by an impostor who had made one document do duty several times over. Yet until we have the writings of the heresiarchs actually in our hands, we must always be in doubt as to how far their opinions have been correctly recorded for us. The post-Christian Gnostic sects have been compared with great aptness to the Protestant bodies which have sprung up outside the Catholic Church since the German Reformation<sup>2</sup>, and the analogy in most respects seems to be perfect. Yet it would probably be extremely difficult for a bishop of the Church of Rome or of that of England to give within the compass of an heresiology like those quoted above an account of the tenets of the different sects in England and America, without making grave and serious mistakes in points of detail. The difficulty would arise from want of first-hand knowledge, in spite of the invention of printing having made the dissemination of information on such subjects a thousand times more general than in sub-Apostolic times, and of the fact that the modern sects, unlike their predecessors, do not seek to keep their doctrines secret. But the analogy shows us another cause of error. The "Free Churches," as they are called in modern parlance, have from the outset shown themselves above all things fissiparous, and it is enough to mention the names of Luther, Zwingli, Calvin, Socinus, Wesley, and Chalmers to show how hopelessly at variance the teachings of the founders of sects at first sight are. But in spite of this, there seems to have been always a sort of fluidity of doctrine among them, and hardly any of

<sup>1</sup> Amélineau, *Le Gnosticisme Égyptien*, p. 75, thus enumerates them: the doctrine of emanation, an unknown [*i.e.* an inaccessible and incomprehensible] God, the resemblance of the three worlds, the aeonology of Simon, and a common cosmology. To this may be added the inherent malignity of matter and the belief in salvation by knowledge. See Krüger, *La Grande Encyclopédie*, s.v. Gnosticisme.

<sup>2</sup> Renan, *Marc Aurèle*, p. 114.

the Nonconformist sects now profess the dogmas with which they first came into existence. The changes in this respect, however, never involve the borrowing of new tenets from sources external to them all, but seem to be brought about by a sort of interfiltration between one sect and another. Thus, for example, for many centuries after the Reformation the majority of the dissident sects which rejected all connection with the Catholic Church were among the stoutest defenders of the Divinity of Jesus, and the Socinians who held the contrary opinion were in an entirely negligible minority. At the present day, however, the tendency seems to run the other way, and many Nonconformist bodies are leaning towards Unitarian doctrines, although few of them probably have ever heard the name of Socinus. A similar tendency to interpenetration of doctrines early showed itself among the Gnostics; and there can be little doubt that it sometimes led to a fusion or amalgamation between sects of widely differing origin. Hence it is not extraordinary that certain tenets are sometimes recorded by the Fathers as peculiar to one Gnostic leader and sometimes to another, and to trace accurately their descent, it would be necessary to know the exact point in the history of each sect at which such tenets appeared. But the Fathers seldom thought of distinguishing between the opinions of an heresiarch and those of his successors, and the literary habits of the time were not in favour of accurate quotation of documents or even of names<sup>1</sup>. This forms the chief difficulty in dealing with the history of the Gnostic teaching, and although the discovery of fresh documents contemporary with those we now possess would undoubtedly throw additional light upon the subject, it is probable that it will never be entirely overcome.

<sup>1</sup> Witness the confusion between Ennoia and Epinoia in Chapter VI, vol. I. p. 180, n. 4, *supra*, and between Saturnilus and Saturninus in this chapter, p. 9. So Irenaeus and others record the opinions of an associate of Marcus whom they call "*Colarbasus*," a name which modern criticism has shown to be a mistake for קול ארבע Kol-arba, "The Voice of the Four" or the Supreme Tetrad. See Renan, *Marc Aurèle*, p. 129; Hort in *Dict. Christian Biog. s.h.v.* So Clement of Alexandria, *Protrept.* c. II. mistakes Evøe, the mystic cry of the Bacchantes, for the Eve of Genesis.

Generally speaking, however, Gnosticism played a most important part in the history of Christianity. Renan's view that it was a disease which, like croup, went near to strangling the infant Church is often quoted<sup>1</sup>; but in the long run it is probable that Gnosticism was on the whole favourable to her development. In religion, sentiment often plays a larger part than reason; and any faith which would enable men of weight and influence to continue the religious practices in which they had been brought up, with at the outset but slight modification, was sure of wide acceptance. There seems no doubt that the earlier Gnostics continued to attend the mysteries of the Chthonian deities in Greece and of their Oriental analogues, Osiris, Attis, Adonis, and the like elsewhere, while professing to place upon what they there saw a Christian interpretation<sup>2</sup>. Here they acted like the little leaven that leaveneth the whole lump, and this did much to spread the knowledge of the new faith among those spiritually-minded Gentiles, who would never have felt any interest in Christianity so long as it remained merely a branch of Judaism<sup>3</sup>. Most of them, moreover, sooner or later abandoned their Gnosticism, and became practising members of the Catholic Church, who sometimes went a long way to meet them. As Renan has said, none of them ever relapsed into Paganism<sup>4</sup>, and in this way the so-called heresies became at once the feeders of orthodox Christianity and its richest recruiting-ground<sup>5</sup>. They offered in fact an easy road by which the wealthy, the learned, and the highly-placed could pass from Paganism to Christianity without suffering the inconvenience imposed upon the first followers of the Apostles.

<sup>1</sup> Renan, *L'Église Chrétienne*, p. 140.

<sup>2</sup> Hippolytus, *op. cit.* Bk v. c. 9, p. 177, Cruice.

<sup>3</sup> As in the case of Clement of Alexandria, who seems to have been initiated into most of the heathen mysteries then current. It is to be noted, too, that Origen, although he speaks of the Ophites as an insignificant sect (see Chapter VIII, *infra*), yet professes to know all about their secret opinions.

<sup>4</sup> Renan, *Marc Aurèle*, p. 139.

<sup>5</sup> Thus Ambrose of Milan had been before his conversion a Valentinian, Epiphanius a Nicolaitan. See Eusebius, *H.E.* Bk vi. c. 18; Epiph. *Haer.* xxvi. c. 17, p. 198, Oehler.

On the other hand, it may be argued that the Church in receiving such recruits lost much of that simplicity of doctrine and practice to which it had hitherto owed her rapid and unvarying success. The Gnostics brought with them into their new faith the use of pictures and statues, of incense, and of all the paraphernalia of the worship of the heathen gods. Baptism which, among the Jewish community in which Christianity was born, was an extremely simple rite, to be performed by anybody and entirely symbolical in its character<sup>1</sup>, became an elaborate ceremony which borrowed the name as well as many of the adjuncts of initiation into the Mysteries. So, too, the Agape (love-feast) or common meal, which in pre-Christian times was, as we have seen, common to all Greek religious associations unconnected with the State, was transformed by the Gnostics into a rite surrounded by the same provisions for secrecy and symbolizing the same kind of sacrifice as those which formed the central point of the mystic drama at Eleusis and elsewhere. Both these sacraments, as they now came to be called, were thought to be invested with a magical efficacy, and to demand for their proper celebration a priesthood as exclusive as, and a great deal more ambitious than, that of Eleusis or Alexandria. The daring speculations of the Gnostics as to the nature of the godhead and the origin of the world also forced upon the Catholics the necessity of formulating her views on these points and making adhesion to them a test of membership<sup>2</sup>. To do so was possibly to choose the smaller of two evils, yet it can hardly be denied that the result of the differences of opinion thus aroused was to deluge the world

<sup>1</sup> It could be even self-administered, as in the *Acts of Paul and Thekla*, where Thekla baptizes herself in the arena. See Tischendorf's text. The *Clementine Homilies* (Bk xiv. c. 1) show that it could be immediately followed by the Eucharist without any intermediate rite or preparation. Contrast with this the elaborate ceremonies described by Cyril of Jerusalem, where the white-robed band of converts after a long catechumenate, including fasting and the communication of secret doctrines and passwords, approach on Easter Eve the doors of the church where the lights turned darkness into day. See Hatch, *H. L.* pp. 297, 299.

<sup>2</sup> Duchesne, *Hist. Christian Ch.* p. 32; Harnack, *What is Christianity?* Eng. ed. p. 210.

with blood and to stay the progress of human knowledge for more than a thousand years<sup>1</sup>. It is said that if Gnosticism had not been forcibly suppressed, as it was directly the Christian priesthood obtained a share in the government of the State, Christianity would have been nothing but a battle-ground for warring sects, and must have perished from its own internal dissensions. It may be so ; but it is at least as possible that, if left unmolested, many of the wilder sects would soon have withered away from their own absurdity, and that none of the others would have been able to endure for long. In this respect also, the history of the post-Reformation sects offers an interesting parallel.

Be that as it may, it is plain that the Catholic Church, in devoting her energies to the suppression of the Gnostic heresies, lost much of the missionary power which till then had seemed all-conquering. During the two centuries which elapsed between the siege of Jerusalem under Vespasian and the accession of Aurelian, the Church had raised herself from the position of a tiny Jewish sect to that of the foremost among the many religions of the Roman Empire. A brief but bloody persecution under Diocletian convinced the still Pagan Emperors of the impossibility of suppressing Christianity by force, and the alliance which they were thus driven to conclude with it enabled the Church to use successfully against the Gnostics the arm which had proved powerless against the Catholics<sup>2</sup>. Yet the

<sup>1</sup> As Hatch, *H. L.* pp. 274-279, has pointed out, the term *ἡμετέριος*, which led to so much shedding of Christian blood, first occurs among the post-Christian Gnostics, and led in turn to most of the wranglings about "substance," "person," and the other metaphysical distinctions and their result in "strife and murder, the devastation of fair fields, the flame of fire and sword" (*ibid.* p. 279). For the possibilities of Greek science, had it not been opposed by the Church, see *ibid.* p. 26.

<sup>2</sup> See the edict of Constantine, which Eusebius (*Vit. Constantini*, cc. LXIV., LXV.) quotes with unholy glee, prohibiting the Gnostics from presuming to assemble together either publicly or privately, and commanding that their "houses of prayer" should be confiscated and handed over to the Catholic Church. Eusebius (*ibid.* c. LXVI.) says that the result of this was that the "savage beasts crept secretly into the Church," and continued to disseminate their doctrines by stealth. Perhaps such a result was to be expected.

triumph was a costly one, and was in its turn followed by a schism which rent the Church in twain more effectually than the Gnostic speculations could ever have done. In the West, indeed, the Latin Church was able to convert the barbarians who extinguished the Western half of the Roman Empire ; but in the East, Christianity had to give way to a younger and more ardent faith. How far this was due to the means taken by the Church to suppress Gnosticism must still be a matter of speculation, but it is certain that after her first triumph over heresy she gained no more great victories.



## CHAPTER VIII

### POST-CHRISTIAN Gnostics: THE OPHITES

ALTHOUGH the Ophites were one of the most widely-spread and in some respects the most interesting of the heretical sects which came to light after the foundation of the Christian Church, we know nothing at first hand about their origin. Philastrius, or Philaster of Brescia, writing about 380 A.D., includes them among those "who taught heresies before the Coming of Christ<sup>1</sup>"; but the phrase does not perhaps bear its apparent meaning, and the late date at which he wrote makes it unlikely that he possessed any exclusive evidence on the point. A more plausible tradition, which is common to St Augustine<sup>2</sup>, to the tractate *Against All Heresies* which passes under the name of Tertullian<sup>3</sup>, and to the similar one attributed to St Jerome<sup>4</sup>, is that the Ophites derived their doctrines from Nicolaus or Nicolas of Antioch, the deacon mentioned in the Acts<sup>5</sup>, and that they are therefore alluded to under the name of Nicolaitans<sup>6</sup> in the address to the Church of Ephesus in the Canonical Apocalypse. Origen, on the other hand, in his *Discourse against Celsus* says that they boasted of one Euphrates

<sup>1</sup> "Eorum qui ante adventum Christi Haereseos arguuntur." Philastrius, Ep. Brixianensis, *de Haeresibus Liber*, c. I. vol. I. p. 5, Oehler.

<sup>2</sup> Augustine, *de Haeresibus* (cf. *ad Quod vult deum*) Liber, c. XVII. I. p. 200, Oehler.

<sup>3</sup> Pseudo-Tertullianus, *Adversus omnes Haereses*, cc. V., VI. p. 273, Oehler. The writer was probably Victorinus of Pettau.

<sup>4</sup> Pseudo-Hieronymus, *Indiculus de Haeresibus*, c. III., vol. I. p. 285, Oehler.

<sup>5</sup> Acts vi. 5. It will be noted that Epiphanius, who himself belonged to the sect in his youth, interposes only the Basilidians between them and the followers of Saturninus, the "heresy" of which last he derives directly from that of Simon Magus.

<sup>6</sup> Rev. ii. 6, 15.

as their founder<sup>1</sup>; while Hippolytus declares that their tenets were said by themselves to be due to "the very numerous discourses which were handed down by James the brother of the Lord to Mariamne<sup>2</sup>." From which contradictory statements we may gather that the "heresy" of the Ophites was, even as early as 230 A.D., a very old one, which may have appeared even before Christianity began to show its power, and that it was probably born in Asia Minor and owed much to the Pagan religions there practised and little or nothing to any dominant personality as did the systems of Simon Magus and the heresies treated of in the succeeding chapters.

It is also probable that between the time when the Canonical Apocalypse was written and that of Origen and Hippolytus<sup>3</sup>, the Ophites altered their doctrines more than once. We may not be able to go so far as their historian, Father Giraud, who thinks that he can distinguish between their earlier opinions, which he would attribute to the Naassenes or Ophites<sup>4</sup> described by Hippolytus, and those of a later school to which he would assign the name of Ophites specially<sup>5</sup>. Yet many of the

<sup>1</sup> Origen, *cont. Celsum*, Bk vi. c. 28. Possibly the Euphrates called "the Peratic" or Mede by Hippolytus (*op. cit.* Bk iv. c. 2, p. 54, Cruice).

<sup>2</sup> Hippolytus, *op. cit.* Bk v. c. 7, p. 141, Cruice. This Mariamne is doubtless the sister of Philip mentioned in the Apocryphal *Acta Philippi* (c. xxxii., Tischendorf), which have, as is said later, a strong Gnostic or Manichaean tinge. Celsus knew a sect which took its name from her. See Origen, *cont. Cels.* Bk v. c. 62.

<sup>3</sup> The Canonical Apocalypse is not earlier than 70 A.D., and was probably written soon after the fall of the Temple of Jerusalem. Hippolytus and Origen wrote 130 years later.

<sup>4</sup> Naassene is evidently derived from the Hebrew or Aramaean שֶׁנָּח "Serpent," cf. Hipp. *op. cit.* Bk v. c. 6, p. 139, Cruice, and exactly corresponds to the Greek ὄφίτης and the Latin *serpentinus* (Low Latin *serpentarius*). "Worshipper of the Serpent" seems to be the patristic gloss on the meaning of the word.

<sup>5</sup> Giraud, *Ophitae*, c. 4, § 65, p. 89. The question really depends upon Hippolytus' sources, as to which see last chapter, pp. 11, 12. Cf. De Faye, *Introduction*, etc., p. 41. Hippolytus' Naassene author cannot be much earlier than 170 A.D. since he quotes from St John's Gospel, and probably later than the work of Irenaeus written in 180-185. Yet the Ophite system described by Irenaeus is evidently not a primitive one and has been added to by his Latin translator. See n. 3, p. 47, *infra*.

Fathers confuse their doctrines with those of the Sethians, the Cainites, and other sects which seem to have had some distinguishing features<sup>1</sup>; while Hippolytus, who shows a more critical spirit than the other heresiologists, says expressly that the other heresies just named were little different in appearance from this one, being united by the same spirit of error<sup>2</sup>. The confusion is further increased by his statement that the Naassenes called themselves Gnostics, although Carpocrates' followers, who must have been later in time, are elsewhere said to be the first to adopt this name<sup>3</sup>. For there was at least one other sect of heretics who did the same thing, and to whom Epiphanius in his *Panarion* attributes, together with a theological and cosmological system not unlike that hereafter described, mysteries of unnameable obscenity with which the Ophites were never charged<sup>4</sup>. In this respect it may be as well to remember the words of Tertullian that the heretics

"know no respect even for their own leaders. Hence it is that schisms seldom happen among heretics because, even when they exist, they do not appear; for their very unity is schism. I am greatly in error," he continues, "if they do not amongst themselves even diverge from their own rules, since every man, as it suits his own temper, modifies the traditions he has received after the same fashion as did he who handed them down to him, when he moulded them according to his own free will.... What was allowed to Valentinus is allowable to the Valentinians, and that is lawful for the Marcionites which Marcion did, *i.e.* to innovate on the faith

<sup>1</sup> Irenaeus, Bk I. c. 27, § 1, p. 226, Harvey, says that the Ophites are the same as the Sethians; Hippolytus, *op. cit.* Bk v. c. 11, p. 184, Cruice, that they are connected with the Peratae, the Sethians, and the system of Justinus. Epiphanius, *Haer.* xxxvii. c. 1, p. 494, Oehler, while deriving them from Nicolaus the Deacon, gives them a common origin with those whom he calls Gnostics simply, and identifies these last with the Borboriani, Coddiani, Stratiotici, Phibionitae, Zacchaei, and Barbelitae (see *Haer.* xxvi. c. 3).

<sup>2</sup> Hippolytus, *op. cit.* Bk v. c. 11, p. 184, Cruice.

<sup>3</sup> *ἐαυτοὺς γνωστικούς ὀνομάζοντες.* Hippolytus, *loc. cit.* Eusebius, *H. E.* Bk iv. c. 7, says that Carpocrates was the father of the heresy of the Gnostics and contemporary with Basilides.

<sup>4</sup> Epiphanius, *Haer.* xxvi. c. 7, pp. 174, 176, Oehler.

according to his own judgment. In short, all heresies when investigated are found to be in many particulars disagreeing with their own authors<sup>1</sup>."

If Tertullian was right, it is idle to expect that after the lapse of nineteen centuries we can hope to distinguish between the opinions of an heresiarch and those of his followers who differed from or improved upon his teaching.

Of the country in which the Ophites first appeared, and where to the last they had their strongest following, there can, however, be little doubt. Phrygia, by which is meant the entire central part of Asia Minor or, to use its modern name, Anatolia, must from its situation have formed a great meeting-place for different creeds, among which that of the Jews occupied in the first centuries of our era a prominent place. Seleucus Nicator had followed the example of Alexander in Egypt in granting the Jews full rights of citizenship in all his cities, and Antiochus the Great took even more practical steps towards inducing them to settle there when he transported thither two thousand Jewish families from Mesopotamia and Babylon<sup>2</sup>. These Jews of the Eastern Diaspora or Dispersion had, however, by no means kept whole the faith of their forefathers, and there seems in consequence to have been less racial hatred between them and the earlier inhabitants of the country here than elsewhere<sup>3</sup>. In religious matters, these last, too, seem to have been little affected by the Euhemerism that had destroyed the faith of the more sophisticated Greeks, and the orgiastic worship of Cybele, Attis, and Sabazius found in Phrygia its principal seat. The tendency of the inhabitants towards religious hysteria was not likely to be lessened by the settlement in the centre of Asia Minor of the Celtic tribes known as the Galatae, who had gradually passed under the Roman yoke in the time of Augustus, but seem long to have retained their Celtic taste for innovations

<sup>1</sup> Tertullian, *de Praescript. Haer.* c. XLII.

<sup>2</sup> Josephus, *Antiq.* Bk XII. c. 3.

<sup>3</sup> Ramsay, *Cities and Bishoprics of Phrygia*, II. pp. 667 sqq.; *St Paul*, pp. 142 sqq.; *Commentary on Galatians*, pp. 189 sqq. The fact that Timothy, the son of the Jewess Eunice by a Greek father, was not circumcised (see Acts xvi. 1) is quoted in support.

in religious matters, and to have supplied from the outset an endless number of heresies to the Church<sup>1</sup>. Moreover, in the Wars of Succession which followed the death of Alexander, Phrygia had been bandied about like a shuttlecock between Antigonus and Lysimachus; in the decadence of the Seleucid house, it had been repeatedly harried by the pretenders to the Syrian crown; and it had, during the temporary supremacy of Mithridates and his son-in-law Tigranes, been subject to the tyranny of the Armenians<sup>2</sup>. Thanks to the policy of these barbarian kings, it had in great measure been denuded of its Greek-speaking inhabitants<sup>3</sup>, the growth of its towns had been checked, and the country seems to have been practically divided among a crowd of dynasts or priest-kings, generally the high-priests of temples possessing vast landed estates and preserving their importance by the celebration of yearly festivals. Dr Mahaffy compares these potentates with the prince-bishops and lordly abbots produced by nearly the same conditions in mediaeval Europe<sup>4</sup>, and Sir William Ramsay's and Mr Hogarth's researches of late years in Anatolia have shown how much truth there is in the comparison.

The religion practised by these priest-kings throughout the whole of Asia Minor differed slightly in form, but was one in substance<sup>5</sup>. It was in effect the worship of the bisexual and mortal gods whom we have already seen worshipped under varying names in the Eastern basin of the Mediterranean. These deities, whose alternate appearance as male and female, infant and adult, could only be explained to Western ears as the result of incestuous unions, could all on final analysis be reduced to one great divinity in whom all Nature was contained. The essence of the Anatolian religion, says Sir William Ramsay, when describing the state of things that existed in Phrygia immediately before the preaching of St Paul, was

<sup>1</sup> *E.g.* the Montanist, the most formidable of the heresies which attacked the primitive Church, apart from Gnosticism. Cf. also Galatians i. 6.

<sup>2</sup> Mahaffy, *Greek World under Roman Sway*, p. 168. For the tyranny of the Armenians, see Plutarch, *Lucullus*, cc. XIV., XXI.

<sup>3</sup> Mahaffy, *Gk. World*, p. 100.

<sup>4</sup> Mahaffy, *ibid.* p. 225.

<sup>5</sup> Ramsay, *Cities*, etc., i. p. 9.

“the adoration of the life of Nature—that life apparently subject to death, yet never dying, but reproducing itself in new forms, different and yet the same. This perpetual self-identity under varying forms, this annihilation of death through the power of self-reproduction, was the object of an enthusiastic worship, characterized by remarkable self-abandonment and immersion in the divine, by a mixture of obscene symbolism and sublime truths, by negation of the moral distinctions and family ties that exist in a more developed society, but do not exist in the free life of Nature. The mystery of self-reproduction, of eternal unity amid temporary diversity, is the key to explain all the repulsive legends and ceremonies that cluster round that worship, and all the manifold manifestations or diverse embodiments of the ultimate single divine life that are carved on the rocks of Asia Minor<sup>1</sup>.”

Whether the Phrygians of Apostolic times actually saw all these sublime ideas underlying the religion of their country may be doubted; but it is fairly certain that at the time in question there was worshipped throughout Anatolia a divine family comprising a goddess known as the Mother of the Gods, together with a male deity, who was at once her son, her spouse, her brother, and sometimes her father<sup>2</sup>. The worship of this pair, who were in the last resort considered as one bisexual being, was celebrated in the form of festivals and mystery-plays like those of the Middle Ages, in which the birth, nuptials, death, and resurrection of the divinities were acted in dramatic form. At these festivals, the worshippers gave themselves up to religious excitement alternating between continence sometimes carried to the extent of self-mutilation on the part of the men, and hysterical or religious prostitution on the part of the women<sup>3</sup>. The gathering of foreign merchants and slaves in the Anatolian cities, and the constant shifting of their

<sup>1</sup> Ramsay, *Cities*, etc., I. p. 87.

<sup>2</sup> Ramsay, *ibid.* I. p. 92.

<sup>3</sup> Ramsay, *ibid.* I. pp. 93, 94. The Galli or priests of Cybele, who mutilated themselves in religious ecstasy, seem to have been the feature of Anatolian religion which most struck the Romans, when the statue of the Mother of the Gods first appeared among them. Cf. next page. For the other side of the religion, see Lucian, *de Dea Syria*, cc. VI., XLIII., and Apuleius, *Metamorph.* Bk VIII. c. 29.

inhabitants by their successive masters, had forced on the votaries of these Phrygian deities a *theocrasia* of the most complete kind, and the Phrygian god and goddess were in turn identified with the deities of Eleusis, of whom indeed they may have been the prototypes, with the Syrian Aphrodite and Adonis, with the Egypto-Greek Serapis and Isis, and probably with many Oriental deities as well<sup>1</sup>. At the same time, their fame and their worship had spread far beyond Phrygia. The primitive statue of the goddess of Pessinus, a black stone or baetyl dignified by the name of the Mother of the Gods, was transported to Rome in the stress of the Second Punic War and there became the centre of a ritual served by eunuch priests supported by the State<sup>2</sup>; while, later, her analogue, the Syrian goddess, whose temple at Hierapolis, according to Lucian, required a *personnel* of over three hundred ministrants, became the object of the special devotion of the Emperor Nero<sup>3</sup>. As with the Alexandrian divinities, the respect paid to these stranger deities by the legions carried their worship into every part of the Roman world<sup>4</sup>.

The element which the Jews of Asia contributed to Anatolian religion at this period was probably more important than has been generally supposed. M. Cumont's theory that the epithet of the "Highest" (*ἤψιστος*) often applied to the God of Anatolia and Syria really covers the personality of Yahweh of Israel rests upon little proof at present<sup>5</sup>. It may be conceded that the tendency to monotheism—or to speak strictly their hatred

<sup>1</sup> As in the hymn to Attis said to have been sung in the Great Mysteries, given in the *Philosophumena* (see p. 54, *infra*). Cf. Ramsay, *Cities*, etc., I. pp. 132, 263, 264, for other identifications. The Anatolian name of the *Dea Syria* to whose cult Nero was addicted, was Atargatis, which Prof. Garstang would derive from the Babylonian Ishtar (Strong, *Syrian Goddess*, 1913, p. vii); see Cumont, *Les Religions Orientales dans le Paganisme Romain*, Paris, 1906, p. 126. The whole of Cumont's chapters on Syria and Asia Minor (*op. cit.* pp. 57–89) can be consulted with advantage. The American edition, 1911, contains some additional notes. See, too, Decharme's article on Cybele in Daremberg and Saglio's *Dict. des Antiq.*

<sup>2</sup> Dill, *Nero to Marcus Aurelius*, pp. 548 *sqq.*

<sup>3</sup> See n. 1, *supra*; Suetonius, *Nero*, c. LVI.

<sup>4</sup> Dill, *loc. cit.*, and authorities there quoted.

<sup>5</sup> Cumont, *Rel. Or.* p. 77, and see index to American edition, 1911.

for the worshippers of many gods—rooted in the Jews from the Captivity onwards may at first have done much to hasten the progress of the *theocrasia* which was welding all the gods of the Mysteries into one great God of Nature. But the Babylonian or Oriental Jews, called in the Talmud and elsewhere the Ten Tribes, probably had some inborn sympathy with the more or less exalted divinities of the West. Even in the temple of Jerusalem, Ezekiel sees in his vision “women weeping for Tammuz<sup>1</sup>,” while Jeremiah complains of the Jews making cakes to the Queen of Heaven, which seems to be another name for the Mother of the Gods<sup>2</sup>. The feminine side of the Anatolian worship can therefore have come to them as no new thing. Perhaps it was due to this that they so soon fell away from their ancestral faith, and that, in the words of the Talmud, “the baths and wines of Phrygia separated the Ten Tribes from their brethren<sup>3</sup>.” That their collection of money for the Temple in Roman times was due not so much to any religious motive, as to some of the financial operations in which the Jews were always engaging, Cicero hints with fair plainness in his Oration in defence of Flaccus<sup>4</sup>. They seem, too, to have intermarried freely with the Greek citizens, while the sons of these mixed marriages did not undergo the circumcision which the Jews of the Western Dispersion demanded not only from native Jews but also from proselytes of alien blood<sup>5</sup>.

The Jews also brought with them into Phrygia superstitions or side-beliefs to which they were probably much more firmly attached than to their national religion. The practice of magic had always been popular among the Chosen People as far back as the time of Saul, and the bowls inscribed with spells against enchantments and evil spirits form almost the only relics which

<sup>1</sup> Ezekiel viii. 14.

<sup>2</sup> Jeremiah vii. 18 ; lxiv. 17–19.

<sup>3</sup> Ramsay, *Cities*, etc., II. p. 674, quoting Neubauer, *Géographie du Talmud*.

<sup>4</sup> Cicero, *pro Flacc.* c. xxviii. The Jews of the Dispersion in Egypt had temples of their own, in one at least of which Yahweh had for assessors a goddess Anat and a subordinate god Bethel. See René Dussaud, “Les Papyrus judéo-araméens d’Elephantiné,” *R.H.R.* t. Lxiv. (1911) p. 350.

<sup>5</sup> Acts xvi. 2, 3. See n. 3, p. 28, *supra*.



they have left in the mounds which mark their settlement at Hilleh on the site of the ancient Babylon<sup>1</sup>. From this and other evidence, it would seem that the Babylonian Jews had borrowed from their Chaldaean captors many of their views as to the importance of the Name in magic, especially when used for the purposes of exorcism or of spells; that they thought the name of their national god Yahweh particularly efficacious; and that the different names of God used in the Old Testament were supposed, according to a well-known rule in magic, to be of greater efficiency as the memory of their meaning and actual significance died out among them<sup>2</sup>. The Babylonian Jews, moreover, as is evident from the Book of Daniel, no sooner found themselves among the well-to-do citizens of a great city than they turned to the professional practice of divination and of those curious arts whereby they could make a living from the credulity of their Gentile neighbours without the manual labour always dreaded by them<sup>3</sup>. Hence Phrygia, like the rest of Asia Minor during the Apostolic Age, was full of strolling Jewish sorcerers who undertook for money to cast out devils, to effect and destroy enchantments, to send and interpret dreams, and to manufacture love philtres<sup>4</sup>. That in doing so they made great use of the name of their national deity seems plain from Origen's remark that "not only do those belonging to the Jewish nation employ in their prayers to God and in the exorcising of demons the words: God of Abraham and God of

<sup>1</sup> Layard, *Nineveh and Babylon*, 1853, pp. 509 *sqq.* Was this why Daniel was called "Master of the Magicians"? Dan. iv. 9; v. 11.

<sup>2</sup> Thus, in a Coptic spell, the Words from the Cross: "Eli, eli, lama sabachthani," are described as "the revered names of God." See Rossi, "*Trattato gnostico*" in *Mem. della Real. Accad. di Torino*, Ser. B, XLII. fol. 9. So in mediaeval magic the word "Eieazareie" or "Escherie" is frequently used, apparently without any suspicion that it covers the אהיה אשר אהיה 'Ehyeh 'asher 'ehyeh—"I am that I am" of Exodus.

<sup>3</sup> Hausrath, *Hist. of New Testament Times*, Eng. ed. 1878, i. pp. 126, 127, and authorities there quoted.

<sup>4</sup> See last note. In the Acts, Bar-jesus or Elymas the sorcerer, the seven sons of Sceva, and some of those who burned their magical books at Ephesus, are said to be Jews. Harnack, *Expansion of Christianity*, Eng. ed. i. pp. 156, 157, says the Jews were known as exorcisers of demons throughout the Roman Empire.

Isaac and God of Jacob, but so also do most of those who occupy themselves with magical rites. For there is found in treatises on magic in many countries such an invocation of God and assumption of the divine name, as implies a familiar use of it by these men in their dealings with demons<sup>1</sup>." This is abundantly borne out by the spells preserved for us by the Magic Papyri before mentioned, where the expressions "God of Abraham," "God of Isaac," "God of Jacob" constantly occur. One spell given above contains, as we have seen, along with many unfamiliar expressions drawn from Greek, Persian, Egyptian, and even Sumerian sources, the words "Blessed be the Lord God of Abraham<sup>2</sup>," and in nearly every one do we find the Tetragrammaton or four-lettered name of God transliterated in the A.V. Jehovah, either with or without some of the other Divine names used in the Old Testament. The names of the angels Gabriel, Michael, and Raphael given in the Old Testament and the Apocrypha are also common in all this literature<sup>3</sup>.

Did the Babylonian Jews bring with them into Phrygia any theory of the universe other than the direct and unfettered rule of Jehovah and the creation of the world from nothing, which they gathered from their sacred books? There is little evidence on the point, save some expressions of doubtful import in the Magic Papyri<sup>4</sup> and the statement of Origen that "the name Sabaoth, and Adonai and the other names treated with so much reverence among the Hebrews . . . belong to a secret

<sup>1</sup> Origen, *cont. Cels.* Bk iv. c. 33. Cf. *ibid.* c. 34, and Bk i. c. 22. Also Justin Martyr's *Dial. c. Tryph.* c. LXXXV.

<sup>2</sup> See Chapter III, vol. i. n. 6, p. 106, *supra*.

<sup>3</sup> Karl Wessely, in *Expositor*, Series III, vol. iv. (1886), pp. 194 *sqq.*, gives many specimens of these spells. The papyri from which they are taken are printed in full in his *Griechische Zauberpapyrus von Paris und London*, Wien, 1888, and his *Neue Griechische Zauberpapyri*, Wien, 1893. See also Parthey, *Zwei griechische Zauberpapyri des Berliner Museums*, Berlin, 1866; Leemans, *Papyri Graeci Mus. Ant. Publ. Lugduni Batavi*, t. II., Leyden, 1885, and Kenyon, *Gk. Papyri in B.M.* before quoted.

<sup>4</sup> They sometimes speak of certain expressions being used by the ἀρχιερείς "high priests," Leemans, *op. cit.* t. II. p. 29. Does this mean the adepts in magic or the heads of a sect?

theology which refers to the Framer of all things<sup>1</sup>." It might be possible to deduce from this that the elaborate system known as the Cabala or secret tradition of the Jews was already in existence<sup>2</sup>. This system, on its theoretical or speculative side, attempts to explain the existence of the physical universe by postulating a whole series of intermediate powers emanating from the Supreme Being of whom they are the attributes or names; while, on the other or "practical," it professes to perform wonders and to reveal mysteries by a childish juggling with letters in the shape of anagrams and acrostics or with their numerical values<sup>3</sup>. As has been said above, follies of this last-named kind were unknown neither to the later Orphics nor to the primitive Church, and might well be thought to have been acquired by the Jews during their stay in Babylon, where the Semitic inhabitants seem from a very early date and for magical reasons to have used numbers instead of letters in writing the names of their gods<sup>4</sup>. It would not have been difficult for them to have acquired at the same time from the Persian masters of Babylon the doctrine of emanation instead of creation which is to be found in the Zend Avesta as well as in all the post-Christian Gnostic systems. But there are other channels besides the Anatolian religion through which these ideas might have come into the West<sup>5</sup>, and it will be better not to lay any stress upon this. That the Cabala in the complete form in which it appears in the books known as the *Sepher Jetzirah* and the *Sepher Zohar* does not go further back than the viith or viiith century of our era, seems to be the opinion of all those best qualified to judge in the matter. M. Isidore Loeb, who has given the most coherent and compact summary of Cabalistic teaching that has appeared of late years, finds its germs in Babylonian Judaism at about the same period which saw the blossoming of

<sup>1</sup> Origen, *cont. Cels.* Bk. i. c. 24.

<sup>2</sup> So Kuenen, *Religion of Israel* (Eng. ed.), III. p. 314, says that the existence of the Cabala is indicated in the Talmud.

<sup>3</sup> See Chapter V, vol. I. pp. 169, 170, *supra*.

<sup>4</sup> The Sumerian moon-god, Nannar, was denoted by the number 30, Marduk called 50 and so on. See King, *Seven Tablets of Creation*, 1902, I. p. 66.

<sup>5</sup> See Chapter VII, *supra*.

the Christian Gnostic sects, without going so far as to derive either of the later doctrines from the other<sup>1</sup>.

However this may be, there is a fair consensus of opinion among the Fathers of the Church as to the doctrines current among those whom, for reasons to be presently seen, they called the Ophites or worshippers of the Serpent. The aim of the sect seems to have been to produce an eclectic system which should reconcile the religious traditions current from time immemorial in Western Asia with the worship of the Hellenized gods of Asia Minor, and the teachings of the already powerful Christian Church. With this view they went back to what is probably the earliest philosophical theory of the origin of the universe, and declared that before anything was, there existed God, but God conceived as an infinite ocean of divinity, too great and too remote to be apprehended by man's intelligence, of whom and of whose attributes nothing could be known or said, and who could only be likened to a boundless sea. Something like this was the view of the earliest inhabitants of Babylonia, who declared that before heaven or earth or the gods came into being there was nothing but a vast waste of waters<sup>2</sup>. At some time or another, the same idea passed into Egypt, when the Egyptians attributed the beginning of things to Nu or the primaeval deep<sup>3</sup>; and it was probably the spread of this tradition into Ionia which induced Thales of Miletus, the earliest of the Ionian philosophers, to assert that water was the first of all things<sup>4</sup>. This unknowable and inaccessible

<sup>1</sup> Isidore Loeb, *La Cabbale Juive*, p. 587. F. Herman Krüger, *La Grande Encyclopédie, s.v. Gnosticisme*, and Franck, *La Kabbale*, Paris, 1843, p. 203, both notice the likeness between Gnosticism and the Cabala and say that they are derived from the same source.

<sup>2</sup> See the Sumerian Hymn of Creation translated by Sayce, *Religions of Ancient Egypt and Babylonia* (Gifford Lectures), Edinburgh, 1902, p. 380; Jastrow, *Religion of Babylonia and Assyria*, Boston, U.S.A. 1898, p. 490; King, *Seven Tablets*, p. 3; Rogers, *Rel. of Bab.*, p. 108.

<sup>3</sup> "Au commencement était le Nun, l'océan primordial, dans les profondeurs infinies duquel flottaient les germes des choses. De toute éternité Dieu s'engendra et s'enfanta lui-même au sein de cette masse liquide sans forme encore et sans usage." Maspero, *Hist. Ancienne des Peuples de l'Orient*, p. 326.

<sup>4</sup> Diogenes Laertius, *Vit. Philosoph.* Bk I. c. 6.

power, the Ophites declared to be ineffable or impossible to name, and he was only referred to by them as Bythos or the Deep. The same idea and the same name were adopted by most of the later Gnostics<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Including in that name some who attained to high office in the Catholic Church. Thus Hatch, *H. L.* p. 255, says with apparent truth that Clement of Alexandria "anticipated Plotinus in conceiving of God as being 'beyond the One and higher than the Monad itself,' which was the highest abstraction of current philosophy." The passage he here relies on is in Clement's *Paedagogus*, Bk i. c. 8. Hatch goes on to say, "There is no name that can properly be named of Him: 'Neither the One nor the Good, nor Mind, nor Absolute Being, nor Father, nor Creator, nor Lord'"—expressions to be found in Clement's *Stromata*, Bk v. c. 12. Clement's orthodoxy may be called in question; but no fault has been found in that respect with Synesius, Bishop of Ptolemais and the friend of Hypatia. Yet in his Hymns he uses expressions which would have come naturally to the lips of any Ophite. Thus:

Σὺ δ' ἄρρην, σὺ δὲ θῆλυς,  
Σὺ δὲ φωνά, σὺ δὲ σιγά,  
Φύσεως φύσις γονῶσα,  
Σὺ δ' ἄναξ, αἰῶνος αἰών,  
Τὸ μέν, ἢ θέμις βοᾶσαι;

"Male thou and female,  
Voice thou and silence,  
Nature engendered of Nature,  
Thou, the King, the Aeon of Aeons,  
What is it lawful to call thee?

and again

Πατέρων πάντων  
Πάτερ, αὐτοπάτωρ,  
Προπάτωρ, ἀπάτωρ,

Father of all Fathers,  
Father of thyself,  
Propator [Forefather] who hast no  
father,

Υἱὲ σεαυτοῦ.....

O Son of thyself.....

Μύστας δὲ νόος  
Τά τε καὶ τὰ λέγει,  
Βυθὸν ἄρρητον  
'Αμφιχορεύων.

But the initiated mind  
Says this and that,  
Celebrating with dances  
The Ineffable Bythos."

(Hymn III)

The ineffability of divine names was an old idea in Egypt, especially in the Osirian religion, where it forms the base of the story of Ra and Isis. So the name of Osiris himself was said to be ineffable. See Eug. Lefébure in *Sphinx*, Stockholm, vol. i. pp. 99-102. The name of Marduk of Babylon is in the same way declared ineffable in an inscription of Neri-glissar, *Trans. Roy. Soc. Litt.* 2nd series, vol. viii. p. 276. The name of Yahweh became ineffable directly after Alexander. See Halévy, *Revue des Études juives*, t. ix. (1884), p. 172. In every case, the magical idea that the god might be compelled by utterance of his secret name seems to be at the root of the practice. Cf. Erman, *Life in Ancient Egypt*, Eng. ed. p. 354.

From this unknowable principle or Father (Πατὴρ ἄγνωστος) there shone forth, according to the Ophites, a Primordial Light, infinite and incorruptible, which is the Father of all things subsequent to him<sup>1</sup>. Here they may have been inspired, not by the Babylonian, but by its derivative, the Jewish tradition given in the Book of Genesis<sup>2</sup>. But this Light was in effect, though not in name, the chief god of their system, and in Asia Minor the gods had never perhaps been imagined as existing in any but human form. Accordingly they described this Light as the First Man, meaning thereby no terrestrial creature, but a heavenly or archetypal man in whose likeness mankind was afterwards made<sup>3</sup>. From him came forth a second Light sometimes called his Ennoia or Thought, which expression seems to cover the idea that this Second Man or Son of Man, by both which names he was known to the Ophites, was not begotten in the ordinary way of mortals, but was produced from the First Man as a thought or concept is formed in the brain<sup>4</sup>. Or we may, to take another metaphor, regard this Ennoia as the rays of light which emanate or flow forth from a lamp or other source of light, but which have no independent existence and still remain connected with their parent. Such was the Ophite idea with regard to the two great Lights or the

<sup>1</sup> The whole account of Ophite doctrine as to the origin of things is here taken from Irenaeus, Bk i. c. 28, pp. 226 *sqq.*, Harvey.

<sup>2</sup> Genesis i. 8.

<sup>3</sup> Philo explains that there is a vast difference between man as now made and the first man who was made according to the image of God, *De opificio mundi*, c. 46. This idea of an archetypal man was widely spread over Eastern Europe and Asia, and Bousset, *Hauptprobleme der Gnosis*, Göttingen, 1907, Kap. rv, "Der Urmensch," has collected all or nearly all the references to it in the literature of the period that could be produced up to that date. As to its origin, the issue is still very doubtful. While we should naturally expect to find it in the Babylonian legends, the Tablets of Creation contain no certain allusion to it, while it is certainly to be traced in the Zend Avesta and its related books. Until we are able to compare the dates of these two sources it seems idle to speculate as to which is the original one and which the derived. But see Introduction (pp. xxi-xxiii and note on last page quoted) *supra*.

<sup>4</sup> This is a less primitive and therefore probably later way of accounting for the birth of one spiritual or superhuman being from another, than that of Simon Magus who made his Supreme Being androgynous.

First and Second Man whom they refused to consider as separate, giving them both the name of Adamas, or the Unconquered, a classical epithet of the Hades already identified at Eleusis with Dionysos<sup>1</sup>. They also called them, as will be seen later, the Father-and-Son. In this, perhaps, they did not go outside the conception of the Anatolian religion, which always represented the Divine Son as the spouse of the goddess who gave him birth, and in this way eternally begetting himself. Thus, the Phrygian goddess Cybele under the name of Agdistis was said to be violently enamoured of Atys who was in effect her own son<sup>2</sup>. The same idea was familiar to the Egyptians, among whom more than one god is described as the "bull (*i.e.* male or husband) of his mother," and it may thus have passed into the Alexandrian religion, where Horus was, as we have seen, often given instead of Osiris as the lover of Isis<sup>3</sup>. At Eleusis it was more modestly concealed under the myth which made Dionysos or Hades at once the ravisher of Persephone and her son by Zeus in serpent form—a myth which is summed up in the mystic phrase preserved by Clement of Alexandria that "The bull is the father of the serpent, and the serpent the father of the bull<sup>4</sup>."

Thus the Ophites accounted for the divinity who was in effect their Supreme God, the still higher Bythos, as we have seen, being put in the background as too awful for human consideration<sup>5</sup>. But it was still necessary to make manifest

<sup>1</sup> Theocritus, *Idyll*, II. l. 34. For the identity of Hades and Dionysos see Chapter II. vol. I. *supra*.

<sup>2</sup> Pausanias, *Descript. Graec.* Bk VIII. cc. 17, 20; Arnobius, *adv. Gentes*, Bk v. cc. 5, 7. Cf. Decharme in Daremberg and Saglio's *Dict. des Antig. s.v.* Cybele.

<sup>3</sup> See Chapter II. vol. I. *supra*.

<sup>4</sup> Clem. Alex. *Protrept.* c. II.; Arnobius, *op. cit.* Bk VI. c. 21, calls it "the well-known senarian verse of a poet of Tarentum," and connects it with the Sabazian rites, whence it probably found its way to Eleusis.

<sup>5</sup> This relegation of the really Supreme God to an unregarded place in the pantheon is common enough in the history of religions. Thus the Shilluks of the Upper Nile take little notice of their great god Jôk, to whom they only sacrifice once a year, reserving all the rest of their worship for a being intermediate between God and man called Nyakang. See Gleichen, *The Anglo-Egyptian Soudan*, vol. I. pp. 162, 197, and *R.H.R.* 1911, Juillet-Août.

the feminine aspect of the deity which was always very prominent in Asia Minor. The Mother of the Gods, known as Ma in Lydia, Cybele in Phrygia proper, Artemis at Ephesus, the unnamed Syrian goddess at Hierapolis, and Aphrodite in Cyprus and elsewhere<sup>1</sup>, was in the early Christian centuries the most prominent person in the Anatolian pantheon, a fact which Sir William Ramsay would attribute to the matriarchate, *Mutterrecht*, or custom of descent in the female line, which he thinks indigenous to Asia Minor. In the earliest Phrygian religion there seems little doubt that the supreme goddess was originally considered to be bisexual, and capable of production without male assistance, as is expressly stated in the legend of Agdistis or Cybele preserved by Pausanias<sup>2</sup>, and perhaps hinted at in the stories of Amazons spread throughout the whole of Asia Minor. But it is probable that, as Sir William Ramsay himself says, this idea had become less prominent with the immigration from Europe of tribes of male warriors without female companions<sup>3</sup>, while Semitic influence was always against it. Hence the Ophites found themselves compelled to make their female deity inferior or posterior to their male. "Below these, again (*i.e.* below the First and Second Man or Father-and-Son)," says Irenaeus in reporting their doctrines, "is the Holy Spirit... whom they call the First Woman<sup>4</sup>." Neither he nor Hippolytus gives us any direct evidence of the source whence this feminine Power was thought by them to have issued. But Hippolytus says without circumlocution that "this Man," *i.e.* Adamas or the Father-and-Son, "is both male and female<sup>5</sup>," and he quotes the words of an Ophite hymn<sup>6</sup> addressed to him that: "*From thee is Father and through thee is Mother, two names immortal, parents of Aeons, O thou citizen of heaven,*

<sup>1</sup> See n. 1, p. 31, *supra*. The *Dea Syria* was otherwise called Atargatis, of which Derketo was, *teste* Prof. Garstang, a homonym. See Strong, *The Syrian Goddess*, p. 52 and n. 25.

<sup>2</sup> See n. 1, p. 31, *supra*.

<sup>3</sup> Ramsay, *Cities*, etc., i. p. 9.

<sup>4</sup> Irenaeus, *op. cit.* Bk i. c. 28, p. 227, Harvey.

<sup>5</sup> ἀρσενόθης, Hippolytus, *op. cit.* Bk v. c. 1, p. 139, Cruice.

<sup>6</sup> See next note.



Man of mighty name<sup>1</sup> !” Later, he puts in the mouth of the Naassene or Ophite writer from whom he repeatedly quotes, the phrase :

“The Spirit is where the Father and the Son are named, from whom and from the Father it is there born ; and this (that is, the Spirit) is the many-named, myriad-eyed Incomprehensible One for whom every nature in different ways yearns,”

or in other words the soul or animating principle of Nature<sup>2</sup>. It therefore seems that the first Ophites made their Supreme God a triad like the Eleusinian, the Alexandrian, and the Anatolian, consisting of three persons two of whom were males and the third a female, or a Father, Mother, and Son, of whom the Son was but another and renewed form of the Father, while the union of all three was necessary to express every aspect of the Deity, who was nevertheless one in essence<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Ἀπὸ σοῦ πατήρ καὶ διὰ σε μήτηρ, τὰ δύο ἀθάνατα ὀνόματα, Αἰώνων γονεῖς, πολῖτα οὐρανοῦ, μεγαλύνουμε ἄνθρωπε, Hippolytus, *op. cit.* Bk v. c. 1, p. 140, Cruice. Salmon points out that almost the same words occur in Hippolytus' account of the heresy of Monoimus the Arab, where he describes the monad as being among other things: Αὕτη μήτηρ, αὕτη πατήρ, τὰ δύο ἀθάνατα ὀνόματα, *op. cit.* Bk viii. c. 12, p. 410, Cruice. He is inclined to attribute this to the real or supposed fact that both the Naassenes and Monoimus borrowed from the *Apophysis* of Simon. See Salmon in *Dict. Christian Biog. s.v. Monoimus*.

<sup>2</sup> Τὸ δὲ πνεῦμα ἐκεῖ [ἐστίν] ὅπου καὶ ὁ Πατήρ ὀνομάζεται καὶ ὁ Υἱός, ἐκ τούτου [καὶ ἐκ] τοῦ Πατρὸς ἐκεῖ γεννώμενον, κ.τ.λ., Hippolytus, *op. cit.* Bk v. c. 9, pp. 174, 185, Cruice. The words in brackets are Cruice's emendation. Duncker and Schneidewin omit them and read *γεννώμενος* for *γεννώμενον*. Giraud, *op. cit.* pp. 92, 93, agrees with Cruice's reading, and points out that both the Spirit and the Son are here put forward as the masculine and feminine forms respectively of the great Adamas. It is evident, however, that among the earlier Ophites represented by Irenaeus' Greek text, the Spirit or First Woman was thought to come into being *after* the First Man and the Son of Man. See Irenaeus, Bk i. c. 28, p. 227, Harvey.

<sup>3</sup> Thus after saying that “he who says all things are composed (*συνεστάναι*) from one (substance) errs, but that he who says they are framed from three speaks the truth,” he goes on to say *Μία γάρ ἐστι φησίν, ἡ μακαρία φύσις τοῦ μακαρίου ἀνθρώπου τοῦ ἄνω, τοῦ Ἀδάμαντος· μία δὲ ἡ θνητὴ κάτω· μία δὲ ἡ ἀβασίλευτος γενεὰ ἡ ἄνω γενομένη, κ.τ.λ.*, “For one is the blessed nature of the blessed Man above, viz. : Adamas, and one is the

This threefold division of things, said the Ophites, ran through all nature "there being three worlds or universes: the angelic (that sent directly from God), the psychic, and the earthly or material; and three Churches: the Chosen, the Called, and the Captive<sup>1</sup>." The meaning of these names we shall see later when we consider the Ophite idea of the Apocatastasis<sup>2</sup> or return of the worlds to the Deity.

First, however, another Power had to be produced which should serve as an intermediary or ambassador from the Supreme Triad to the worlds below it. This necessity may have arisen from Plato's view, adopted by Philo of Alexandria, that God was too high and pure to be contaminated by any contact with matter<sup>3</sup>. But it may also owe something to the idea common to all Orientals that a king or great man can only communicate with his inferiors through a *wakil* or agent; and that this idea was then current in Phrygia seems plain from the story in the Acts of the Apostles that in the Lycaonian province Barnabas, who was of majestic presence, was adored and nearly sacrificed to as Zeus, while Paul, who was the principal speaker, was only revered as Hermes<sup>4</sup>. The later Ophite account of the production of this intermediary power or messenger which we find in Irenaeus is that the Father-and-Son "delighting in the beauty of the Spirit"—that is of the First Woman—"shed their light upon her" and thus brought into existence "an incorruptible light, the third man, whom they call Christos<sup>5</sup>." With this last addition the

nature below which is subject to death, and one is the kingless race which is begotten above," etc. Hippolytus, *op. cit.* Bk v. c. 8, p. 157, Cruice.

<sup>1</sup> Hippolytus, *op. cit.* Bk v. c. 1, p. 140, Cruice.

<sup>2</sup> ἀποκατάστασις (see p. 57 *infra*). As Salmon has shown with great clearness, this, rather than the redemption of individual souls, is the aim of all post-Christian Gnostic systems, *Dict. Christian Biog. s.v. Gnosticism*.

<sup>3</sup> Philo, *de Sacrificantiis*, c. 13; II. p. 261, Mangey.

<sup>4</sup> Acts xiv. 11-18.

<sup>5</sup> Postea, dicunt, exultante primo homine cum filio suo super formositate Spiritus, hoc est foeminae, et illuminante eam, generavit ex ea lumen incorruptibile, tertium masculum, quem Christum vocant. So the Latin version of Irenaeus, Bk I. c. 28, p. 227, Harvey. The Greek text, which should contain Irenaeus' own words, only says: Ἐπαρσέναι δὲ φασὶ τὸν

Divine Family was considered complete, and the same author tells us that Christos and his mother were "immediately drawn up into the incorruptible aeon which they call the veritable Church<sup>1</sup>." This seems to be the first appearance in Gnosticism of the use of the word Church as signifying what was later called the Pleroma or Fulness of the Godhead; but it may be compared to the "Great Council" apparently used in the same sense by some unidentified prophet quoted by Origen, of which Great Council Christ was said by the prophet to be the "Angel" or messenger<sup>2</sup>.

From this perfect Godhead, the Ophites had to show the evolution of a less perfect universe, - a problem which they approached in a way differing but slightly from that of Simon Magus. This last, as we have seen, interposed between God and our own world three pairs of "Roots" or Powers together with an intermediate world of aeons whose angels and authorities had brought our universe into existence. These angels purposely fashioned it from existing matter, the substance most removed from and hostile to God, in order that they might

πρώτον "Ἀνθρώπον, καὶ τὸν δεύτερον, τῆς ὄρας τοῦ Πνεύματος...καὶ παιδοποιῆσαι φῶς...ὃ καλοῦσι Χριστόν. Something, however, has evidently been expunged from the earlier version of the story, and it is possible that the later interpolation is due to the desire of the translator to make the teaching of the heretics as repulsive as possible. Theodoret merely copies the Latin text of Irenaeus.

<sup>1</sup> εἰς τὸν ἄφθαρτον ἀνασπασθῆναι Αἰῶνα, ἣν καὶ ἀληθινὴν ἐκκλησίαν καλοῦσι. Irenaeus, *loc. cit.* p. 228, Harvey.

<sup>2</sup> This Divine Family or Council must have been an old idea in post-exilic Judaism. Justin Martyr, *Dial. c. Tryph.* c. 126, says that Christ is called the "Angel of the Great Council" by Ezekiel, but the expression is not to be found in the A.V. Origen, *cont. Cels.* Bk v. c. 53, also speaks of a prophecy in which Jesus was described as the "Angel of the Great Council, because he announced to men the great counsel of God"—a pun which curiously enough is the same in Greek as in English. The Jews of Elephantine worshipped in their temple a god and a goddess who were looked upon as the assessors, if the inferiors, of Yahweh (see n. 4, p. 32, *supra*). In the Talmud, it is said that God has an upper or celestial *familia* or tribunal without consulting which he does nothing, and which is indicated by the "holy ones" of Dan. iv. 17. See Taylor, *Pirke-Aboth*, Cambridge, 1877, II. p. 43, n. 7. The expression "Angel of the Great Council" recurs in the Gnostic epitaph from the Via Latina given later (Chapter IX).

rule over it and thus possess a dominion of their own. But the Ophites went behind this conception, and made the first confusion of the Divine light with matter the result of an accident. The light, in Irenaeus' account of their doctrines, shed by the Father-and-Son upon the Holy Spirit was so abundant that she could not contain it all within herself, and some of it therefore, as it were, boiled over and fell down<sup>1</sup>, when it was received by that matter which they, like Simon, looked upon as existing independently<sup>2</sup>. They described this last as separated into four elements, water, darkness, the abyss, and chaos, which we may suppose to be different strata of the same substance, the uppermost layer being apparently the waste of waters mentioned in Genesis. Falling upon these waters, the superfluity of light of the Holy Spirit stirred them, although before immovable, to their lowest depths, and took from them a body formed apparently from the envelope of waters surrounding it. Then, rising again by a supreme effort from this contact, it made out of this envelope the visible heaven which has ever since been stretched over the earth like a canopy<sup>3</sup>. This superfluity of

<sup>1</sup> Irenaeus, Bk I. c. 28, pp. 227, 228, Harvey.

<sup>2</sup> Giraud, *op. cit.* p. 95, thinks that in the Naassene teaching matter does not really exist, all things being contained in Adamas. The absolute antagonism of God and matter is, however, too strongly marked a feature of nearly all the sources from which the Ophites can have drawn their doctrine for his theory to be entertained. Berger, *Études des Documents nouveaux fournis sur les Ophites par les Philosophumena*, Nancy, 1873, p. 25, puts forward the same idea as a mere figure of speech and in order apparently to reconcile the Ophite doctrine with St John's statement that without the Word "nothing" was made. Later he (*ibid.* pp. 61, 104, 105) points out that the tendency of the Ophite like all other Gnostic doctrine is to widen rather than to narrow the abyss between Spirit and Matter.

<sup>3</sup> This is a variant, and an important one, of the Babylonian myth which makes Bel, after defeating Tiamat the Dragon of Chaos, cut her in two halves and make out of them the visible heaven and earth. See Rogers, *op. cit.* p. 126. The heaven which there is fashioned from the powers of evil, is here at any rate half divine. In later systems, such as one of those in the *Pistis Sophia* and especially that of the Manichaeans, the older Babylonian idea is returned to. It would therefore seem that for the modification here introduced, the Ophites were indebted to Jewish influence and forced it to agree with the story of Genesis. See Irenaeus, *op. cit.* Bk I. c. 28, p. 229, Harvey.

light which thus mingled with matter, the earlier Ophites called, like the authors of the Wisdom-literature, Sophia, and also Prunicos (meaning apparently the "substitute") and described as bisexual<sup>1</sup>. Another and perhaps a later modification

<sup>1</sup> Irenaeus, *loc. cit.* p. 228, Harvey. This is the first unmistakable allusion to the figure of the Sophia which is so prominent in most of the Gnostic systems and reappears in Manichaeism. There can, I think, be no doubt that she is in effect the Great Goddess worshipped throughout Western Asia, who appears under different names in Lydia, Phrygia, Syria, Ionia, Crete, and Greece, and who is to be identified on etymological grounds, if Prof. Garstang (n. I, p. 31, *supra*) is correct, with the Babylonian Ishtar. That the Alexandrians saw her in their goddess Isis has already been shown in Chap. II. Her most prominent characteristics show her to be a personification of the Earth, the mother of all living, ever bringing forth and ever a virgin, as is shown in the "Goddesses Twain," Demeter and Cora. The dove was throughout Asia her symbol and perhaps her totem animal (Strong, *The Syrian Goddess*, pp. 22-24 for authority), as the serpent was that of her spouse or male counterpart (Justin Martyr, *First Apol.* c. xxvii.; Clem. Alex. *Protrept.* c. ii.). In the Orphic cosmogonies she appears under her name of Gaia or Ge as the "first bride" (Abel's *Orphica*, fr. 91) spouse of Uranos, as well as under all her subsequent personifications. She seems, too, to bear much analogy with the Persian Amshaspand, Spenta Armaiti, who is also identified with the earth, and is called Sophia or Wisdom (Tiele, *Religion of the Iranian Peoples*, Eng. ed. Bombay, 1912, pp. 130, 131). Whether the Persians also drew this conception from the Babylonian Ishtar is a question which some years ago might have been answered in the affirmative. Now, however, it has been complicated by the identification of this Spenta Armaiti with the Aramati of the Vedas—for which see M. Carnoy's article *Aramati-Armatay* in *Le Muséon*, Louvain, vol. xiii. (1912), pp. 127-146—and the discovery of Winckler that the Vedic gods were worshipped in Asia Minor before 1272 B.C. Her appearance in the cosmology of the Gnostics under the name of Sophia is, however, probably due to the necessity of effecting by hook or by crook a harmony between Gentile and Jewish ideas, and is doubtless due in the first instance to the passage in the Book of Proverbs viii., ix., where Wisdom חֵכֶם or 'Αχαμώθ (in both languages feminine) is described as existing from the beginning and the daily delight of Yahweh, rejoicing always before him and his instrument in making the universe (Clem. *Hom.* xvi. c. 12). It is said that Simon Magus called his mistress Helena by the name of Sophia, but the story only occurs in Victorinus of Pettau and is probably due to a confusion with the Sophia of later sects like that of Valentinus. In all these, with the single exception of that of Marcion, she plays a predominant part in the destiny of mankind.

of their doctrine fabled that it sprang from the left side of the First Woman while Christos emerged from her right. They therefore called it Sinistra and declared it to be feminine only<sup>1</sup>. Both traditions agreed that this Sophia or Prunicos put forth a son without male assistance, that this son in like manner gave birth to another power and so on, until at last seven powers at seven removes sprang from Sophia. Each of them fashioned from matter a habitation, and these are represented as heavens or hemispheres stretched out one under the other, every one becoming less perfect as it gets further from the Primordial Light<sup>2</sup>. Irenaeus and Hippolytus are agreed that the first or immediate son of Sophia was called Ialdabaoth, a name which Origen says, in speaking of the Ophites, is taken from the art of magic, and which surely enough appears in nearly all the earlier Magic Papyri<sup>3</sup>. Hippolytus says that this Ialdabaoth

<sup>1</sup> This appears in the Latin version of Irenaeus only.

<sup>2</sup> 'Υφ' ἐκάστου δὲ τούτων ἓνα οὐρανὸν δημιουργηθῆναι, καὶ ἕκαστον οἰκεῖν τὸν οἶκόν. Irenaeus, *op. cit.* Bk I. c. 28, p. 230, Harvey.

<sup>3</sup> Origen, *cont. Cels.* Bk VI. c. 32. This Ialdabaoth or Jaldabaoth appears in the systems or heresies of the Nicolaitans and of those whom Epiphanius calls "Gnostics" *par excellence*. See Epiphanius, *op. cit.* Bk I. t. ii., *Haer.* 25, p. 160, and *Haer.* 26, p. 184. Theodoret, *Haer. Fab.* Bk V. c. 9, makes him belong also to the system of the Sethians. In all these he is the son of Sophia and presides over one or more of the super-terrestrial heavens, although the particular place assigned to him differs in the different sects. In the *Pistis Sophia* he is described (in the story of Pistis Sophia proper) as a power "half flame and half darkness" (cf. Ezekiel viii. 2) projected by one of the "triple-powered" gods of our universe and sent down into Chaos for the destruction of the heroine; in one of the later documents of the book we see him as lord of a particular portion of Chaos, where he presides over the punishment of a certain class of sinning souls. His name offers many difficulties. Gieseler reads it ילדא בְּהוּת, "son of Chaos," and this Salmon, *Dict. Christian Biog.* s.h.v., considers the most probable derivation, although Harvey's reading of יהא-לדא בְּהוּת "Lord (or Jah) God of the Fathers," is certainly more appropriate. In the great Magic Papyrus of Paris, the name appears as αλθαβωτ, which can hardly be anything else than Aldabôt or Adabôt, since we have αλθωναι for Adonai in the next line (Griffith, *The Old Coptic magical texts of Paris*, p. 3; extract from the *Zeitschrift für Ägyptische Sprache*, Bd. xxxviii.). In Papyrus XLVI of the British Museum (Kenyon, *Gk. Pap.* p. 69), we find βαλβαβωθ, probably a clerical error for Jaldabaoth, which is again followed as before

was the Demiurge and father of the visible universe or phenomenal world<sup>1</sup>. Irenaeus also gives the names of the later "heavens, virtues, powers, angels, and builders" as being respectively Iao, Sabaoth, Adonai, Eloaeus, Oreus, and Astaphaeus or Astanpheus, which agrees with the Ophite document or Diagram to be presently mentioned<sup>2</sup>. The first four of these names are too evidently the names given in the Old Testament to Yahweh for us to doubt the assertion of the Fathers that by Ialdabaoth the Ophites meant the God of the Jews<sup>3</sup>. The last two names, Oreus and Astaphaeus, Origen also asserts to

by the name *Αδωναί*. In the Leyden Papyrus which calls itself the "8th Book of Moses," we have a god invoked as Aldabeim, which is there said to be an Egyptian name, and to be the *φυσικὸν ὄνομα* "natural name" of the sun and the boat in which he rises when he dawns upon the world (Leemans, *op. cit.* pp. 87, 119, 127). It is not at all certain, however, which of these is the right spelling, for the German editors of Hippolytus read in one place Esaldaios for Ialdabaoth, and the Magic Papyrus last quoted has a name Aldazaô which is said to be quoted from a book of Moses called *Archangelicus* (Leemans, *op. cit.* p. 157). The name Ialdazaô ("El Shaddai"?) is used as that of the "God of Gods" in the great Magic Papyrus of Paris, with whose name that of the aeon Sophia is mentioned (Wessely, *Griech. Zauberpap.* p. 50). The most probable conclusion is that Ialdabaoth represents some name or epithet of God current among the Semitic Babylonians which had fallen into disuse and had been much corrupted by being turned into and out of demotic. So Revilout (*Revue Égyptologique*) gives an instance where the invocation *ἐπίσχες ἐπὶ με* "Come unto me!" by a like process became transmogrified into "*episkhesepimme*" without being recognized by the scribe as Greek.

<sup>1</sup> *εἰδικὸς κόσμος*, Hippolytus, *op. cit.* Bk v. c. 7, p. 153, Cruice. By the expression Demiurge he means that he fashioned it from pre-existent matter, as a workman builds a house.

<sup>2</sup> Irenaeus, Bk i. c. 28, p. 230, Harvey.

<sup>3</sup> Thus Irenaeus, Bk i. c. 18, p. 198, Harvey, in summarizing the teaching of Saturninus says that the god of the Jews was one of the (world-creating) angels. That Saturninus' opinion was derived from or coincided with that of the Ophites, see Salmon, *Dict. Christian Biog. s.v.* Saturninus. Hippolytus Naassene also calls Ialdabaoth "a fiery god" and "a fourth number," *op. cit.* Bk v. c. 7, p. 153, Cruice, in allusion to the text about God being a consuming fire and to his Tetragrammaton or four-lettered name. Epiphanius, *Haer.* xxxvii. c. 4, p. 500, Oehler, says *Καὶ οὗτος ἐστὶ, φασίν, ὁ θεὸς τῶν Ἰουδαίων ὁ Ἰαλδαβαώθ*, "And this Ialdabaoth is, they [the Ophites] say, the God of the Jews."

be taken from the art of magic, and may be supposed to have some connection with fire and water respectively<sup>1</sup>. It is probable that the later Ophites identified all these seven heavens with the seven astrological "planets," i.e. Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, the Sun, Venus, Mercury and the Moon in probably that order<sup>2</sup>.

How now did the earth on which we live come into being? The primitive Babylonians, whose ideas and culture were at a very early date spread over the whole of Asia Minor, conceived the earth not as a globe but as a circular boat like the ancient coracle, over which the heavens stretched like a canopy or hemisphere<sup>3</sup>. Hence we must regard these heavens of the planetary powers, Ialdabaoth and his progeny, as a series of covers fitting one within the other like, in the words of the Fathers, "juggling cups," or to take another simile, the successive skins of an onion. The earth stretched below these, but was at the stage of creation at which we have arrived really without form and void, being the formless waste of waters which covered the denser darkness and chaos. The ordered shape which it afterwards assumed and which we now see, was, in the Ophite story, the result of the fall of no deity, angel, or heavenly power, but of Man. Irenaeus' account of this Second Fall is that the six powers descended from Ialdabaoth began to quarrel with their progenitor for supremacy—an idea which perhaps is to be referred either to the Jewish tradition of the revolt of the angels or with more likelihood to the astrological ideas about the benefic and malefic planets<sup>4</sup>. This so enraged

<sup>1</sup> Origen, *cont. Cels.* Bk vi. c. 32.

<sup>2</sup> Hippolytus, *op. cit.* Bk iv. c. 11.

<sup>3</sup> See the picture by Faucher Gudin of the universe according to the Babylonians in Maspero, *Hist. Ancienne des Peuples de l'Orient Classique*, Paris, 1895, t. i. p. 543.

<sup>4</sup> Irenaeus, Bk i. c. 28, pp. 231, 232, Harvey. A sort of echo or perhaps a more detailed repetition of the story is found in one of the latest documents of the *Pistis Sophia*, where Jesus tells His disciples that the ἀρχοντες or rulers of Adamas once rebelled and persisted in begetting "archons and archangels and angels and serving spirits and decans"; that the 12 aeons, who are evidently the Signs of the Zodiac, divided into two companies of six, half of them under the rule of one Jabraôth repenting and being translated into a higher sphere, while the others were "bound" in our



him that he glared in his wrath upon the underlying dregs of matter, and his thought (*ἐννοια*) implanted there took birth and shape<sup>1</sup>. This fresh son of his was possessed of a quality of the possession of which he himself had never given any evidence, and was called Nous or Intelligence like the male of Simon's first syzygy or pair of roots. But he was said to be of serpent form (*ὀφιδόμορφος*) because, as says the Naassene or Ophite author quoted by Hippolytus, "the serpent is the personification of the watery element," and therefore, perhaps, the symbol of that external ocean which the ancients thought surrounded the inhabited world<sup>2</sup>. It seems more probable, however, that the Ophites were compelled to introduce this form because the serpent was worshipped everywhere in Asia Minor as the type of the paternal aspect of the earth-goddess' consort<sup>3</sup>. This is best shown, perhaps, in the Eleusinian legend of Zeus and Persephone; but Alexander himself was said to have been begotten by Zeus in the form of a serpent, and no Phrygian goddess seems ever to have been portrayed without one<sup>4</sup>. So

firmament under the rule of the five planets. Perhaps the origin of the whole story is the battle of the Gods and the serpent-footed giants, which appears on the Mithraic bas-reliefs, for which see *P.S.B.A.* 1912, p. 134, and Pl. XVI, 7. It is certainly of Asiatic or Anatolian origin, and seems to be connected with volcanic phenomena. Hippolytus, *op. cit.* Bk v. c. 13, p. 192, Cruice, says this rebellion is a "Chaldaean" doctrine.

<sup>1</sup> τὸν δὲ ἀθυμήσαντα, εἰς τὴν τρύγα τῆς ὕλης ἐρεῖσθαι τὴν ἐννοίαν, καὶ γεννῆσαι υἱὸν ὀφιδόμορφον ἐξ αὐτῆς, "and [they say that] he being enraged, beheld his thought in the dregs of matter, and a serpent-formed son was born from it," Irenaeus, Bk i. c. 28, p. 232, Harvey. Perhaps this explains how the Ennoia or Thought of God was supposed to take definite shape. Other editors wish to read ἐπεῖσεσθαι "fixed" for ἐρεῖσθαι.

<sup>2</sup> Hippolytus, Bk v. c. 9, p. 178, Cruice.

<sup>3</sup> See n. 1, p. 45, *supra*. So Hippolytus, *op. cit.* Bk v. c. 9, p. 178, Cruice, when speaking of the Ophites frequenting the mysteries of the Magna Mater, says that there is no temple anywhere [he means in Phrygia] without a serpent. See Ramsay, *Cities, etc.*, i. pp. 51, 87. As King, *Gnostics and their Remains*, p. 225, noted, all the principal cities of Asia Minor, Ephesus, Apamea and Pergamum depicted serpents on their coins. For the story of Alexander's birth, see Budge, *Alexander the Great* (Pseudo-Callisthenes), p. 8.

<sup>4</sup> See Ramsay in last note.

much was this the case that in the Apocryphal *Acta Philippi* it is said that sacred serpents were kept in all the heathen temples in Asia. Hierapolis is, in the same document, called Ophioryma or the serpent's stronghold, whence idolatry seems to be spoken of as the Echidna or Viper<sup>1</sup>. The connection of the serpent with the Sabazian rites has already been mentioned.

This Ophiomorphus, or god in serpent form, was in the later Ophite teaching the cause not only of man's soul but of his passions. The Latin text of Irenaeus says that from him came "the spirit and the soul and all earthly things, whence all forgetfulness, and malice, and jealousy, and envy, and death came into being<sup>2</sup>." This was evidently written under the influence of the Christian idea that the serpent of Genesis was Satan or the Devil. But Hippolytus tells us, no doubt truly, that the Ophiomorphus of the earlier Ophites was in the opinion of his votaries a benevolent and beneficent power. After saying that they worship

"nothing else than Naas, whence they are called Naassenes, and that they say that to this Naas (or serpent) alone is dedicated every temple, and that he is to be found in every mystery and initiatory rite," he continues, "They say that nothing of the things that are, whether deathless or mortal, with or without soul, could exist apart from him. And all things are set under him, and he is good and contains all things within himself, as in the horn of the unicorn, whence beauty and bloom are freely given to all things that exist according to their nature and relationship<sup>3</sup>."

It can hardly be doubted that the writer from whom Hippolytus here quotes is referring to the soul or animating principle of the world, whom he here and elsewhere identifies with the great God of the Greek mysteries<sup>4</sup>. Hence it was the casting-down to this earth of Ophiomorphus which gave it life and shape,

<sup>1</sup> *Acta Philippi* (ed. Tischendorf), *passim*.

<sup>2</sup> dehinc et Spiritum, et animam et omnia mundialia; inde generatum omnem oblivionem, et malitiam, et zelum, et invidiam, et mortem. Irenaeus, Bk i. c. 28, p. 232, Harvey. So Dionysos, whose emblem (Clem. Alex. *Protrept.* c. II.) was the serpent, is identified with the soul of the world. Cf. Berger, *Études sur la Philosophumena*, Nancy, 1873, pp. 39 *seqq.*

<sup>3</sup> Hippolytus, *op. cit.* Bk v. c. 9, p. 178, Cruice.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* Bk v. c. 7, pp. 144, 145, Cruice.

and thus stamped upon it the impress of the First Man<sup>1</sup>. As Ophiomorphus was also the child of Ialdabaoth son of Sophia, the Soul of the World might therefore properly be said to be drawn from all the three visible worlds<sup>2</sup>.

We come to the creation of man which the Ophites attributed to the act of Ialdabaoth and the other planetary powers, and represented as taking place not on the earth, but in some one or other of the heavens under their sway<sup>3</sup>. According to Irenaeus—here our only authority—Ialdabaoth boasted that he was God and Father, and that there was none above him<sup>4</sup>. His mother Sophia or Prunicos, disgusted at this, cried out that he lied, inasmuch as there was above him “the Father of all, the First Man and the Son of Man<sup>5</sup>”; and that Ialdabaoth was thereby led on the counsel of the serpent or Ophiomorphus to say, “Let us make man in our own image<sup>6</sup>!” Here the Greek or older text of Irenaeus ends, and our only remaining guide is the later Latin one, which bears many signs of having been added to from time to time by some person more zealous for orthodoxy than accuracy. Such as it is, however, it narrates at a length which compares very unfavourably with the brevity and concision of the statements of the Greek text, that Ialdabaoth’s six planetary powers on his command and at the instigation of Sophia formed an immense man who could only writhe along the ground until they carried him to Ialdabaoth who breathed into him the breath of life, thereby parting with some of the light that was in himself; that man “having thereby become possessed of intelligence (Nous) and desire (Enthymesis) abandoned his makers and gave thanks to the First Man”; that Ialdabaoth on this in order to deprive man of the light he had given him created Eve out of his own desire; that the other planetary powers fell in love with her

<sup>1</sup> Is this the origin of the ideas on the Macrocosm and the Microcosm? See Chapter XIII, *infra*.

<sup>2</sup> See n. 3, p. 41, *supra*.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Charles, *Book of the Secrets of Enoch*, pp. 7, 57.

<sup>4</sup> Irenaeus, Bk I. c. 28, p. 232, Harvey.

<sup>5</sup> It is curious that she did not also mention herself or the First Woman.

<sup>6</sup> This is the story of the earliest or Greek text; the Latin says that he said it to divert the minds of his rebellious sons.

beauty and begot from her sons who are called angels; and finally, that the serpent induced Adam and Eve to transgress Ialdabaoth's command not to eat of the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge<sup>1</sup>. On their doing so, he cast them out of Paradise, and threw them down to this world together with the serpent or Ophiomorphus. All this was done by the secret contrivance of Sophia, whose object throughout was to win back the light and return it to the highest world whence it had originally come. Her manner of doing so seems to have been somewhat roundabout, for it involved the further mingling of light with matter, and even included the taking away by her of light from Adam and Eve when turned out of Paradise and the restoring it to them when they appeared on this earth—a proceeding which gave them to understand that they had become clothed with material bodies in which their stay would be only temporary<sup>2</sup>. Cain's murder of Abel was brought about by the same agency, as was the begetting of Seth, ancestor of the existing human race. We further learn that the serpent who was cast down got under him the angels begotten upon Eve by the planetary powers, and brought into existence six sons who, with himself, form "the seven earthly demons." These are the adversaries of mankind, because it was on account of man that their father was cast down; and "this serpent is called Michael and Sammael<sup>3</sup>." Later Ialdabaoth sent the

<sup>1</sup> Irenaeus, Bk i. c. 28, pp. 232-234, Harvey. This Adam is of course not to be confused with Adamas. Neither did he resemble the Adam of Genesis, for he is described as being *immensum latitudine et longitudine*. Harvey, *ubi cit.*, gives many parallels to this from the Talmud and Cabala, which must be either taken directly from the Ophite author or borrowed from a common source. For Eve's creation, see n. 2, p. 58, *supra*.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. the vestures of light belonging to Jesus in the *Pistis Sophia*, Chapter X, *infra*. So Philo, *Quaest. et Sol. in Gen.* c. 53, explains that the coats of skin made by God for Adam and Eve are a "figure of speech" for a material body. Origen, in like manner (*cont. Cels.* Bk iv. c. 40), says that the clothing of the protoplasts in tunics of skin covers "a certain secret and mystic doctrine far exceeding Plato's of the soul losing its wings and being borne to earth."

<sup>3</sup> Irenaeus, Bk i. c. 28, pp. 234-236, Harvey. The idea of the seven evil demons is a very old one in the East. See the Babylonian story of the assault of the seven evil spirits on the Moon. Sayce, *Gifford Lectures*,

Flood, sought out Abraham, and gave the Law to the Jews. In this, as in everything, he was opposed by his mother Sophia, who saved Noah, made the Prophets prophesy of Christ, and even arranged that John the Baptist and Jesus should be born, the one from Elizabeth and the other from the Virgin Mary<sup>1</sup>. In all this, it is difficult not to see a later interpolation introduced for the purpose of incorporating with the teaching of the earlier Ophites the Biblical narrative, of which they were perhaps only fully informed through Apostolic teaching<sup>2</sup>. It is quite possible that this interpolation may be taken from the doctrine of the Sethians, which Irenaeus expressly couples in this chapter with that of the Ophites, and which, as given by Hippolytus, contains many Jewish but no Christian features<sup>3</sup>. Many of the stories in this interpolation seem to have found their way into the Talmud and the later Cabala, as well as into some of the Manichaean books.

So far, then, the Ophites succeeded in accounting to their satisfaction for the origin of all things, the nature of the Deity, the origin of the universe, and for that of man's body. But they still had to account in detail for the existence of the soul or incorporeal part of man. Irenaeus, as we have seen, attributes it to Ophiomorphus, but although this may have been the belief of the Ophites of his time, the Naassenes assigned it a more complicated origin. They divided it, as Hippolytus tells us, into three parts which were nevertheless one, no doubt corresponding to the threefold division that we have before seen running through all nature into angelic, psychic, and earthly<sup>4</sup>.

1902, p. 430, in which those who like to rationalize ancient myths can see a lunar eclipse. We meet again with Sammael and Michael as names of one of them in the diagram to be described later.

<sup>1</sup> Irenaeus, Bk I. c. 28, p. 237, Harvey.

<sup>2</sup> The LXX or Greek version of the Old Testament belongs to the Western Diaspora rather than to the Eastern. Perhaps this was why Paul and Barnabas in addressing the Phrygians were careful to give them a summary of Old Testament history. See Acts xiii. 16 *sqq.*

<sup>3</sup> The Sethians had a book called the *Paraphrase of Seth* now lost, which from its name may easily have been a heretical version of the Book of Genesis. See Hippolytus, *op. cit.* Bk v. c. 21, p. 223, Cruice.

<sup>4</sup> Hippolytus, *op. cit.* Bk v. c. 7, p. 145, Cruice, says that this was first taught by the "Assyrians," by which he evidently means the Syrians.

The angelic part is brought by Christos, who is, as we have seen, the angel or messenger of the triune Deity, into "the form of clay<sup>1</sup>," the psychic we may suppose to be fashioned with the body by the planetary powers, and the earthly is possibly thought to be the work of the earthly demons hostile to man<sup>2</sup>. Of these last two parts, however, we hear nothing directly, and their existence can only be gathered from the difference here strongly insisted upon between things "celestial earthly and infernal." But the conveyance of the angelic soul to the body Hippolytus' Ophite writer illustrates by a bold figure from what Homer in the *Odyssey* says concerning Hermes in his character of psychopomp or leader of souls<sup>3</sup>. As to the soul or animating principle of the world, Hippolytus tells us that the Ophites did not seek information concerning it and its nature from the Scriptures, where indeed they would have some difficulty in finding any, but from the mystic rites alike of the Greeks and the Barbarians<sup>4</sup>; and he takes us in turns through the mysteries of the Syrian worshippers of Adonis, of the Phrygians, the Egyptian (or rather Alexandrian) worshippers of Osiris, of the Cabiri of Samothrace, and finally those celebrated at Eleusis, pointing out many things which he considers as indicating the Ophites' own peculiar doctrine on this point<sup>5</sup>. That he considers the god worshipped in all these different mysteries to be one and the same divinity seems plain from a hymn which he quotes as a song of "the great Mysteries," and which the late Prof. Conington turned into English verse<sup>6</sup>. So far as any sense can be read into an

<sup>1</sup> πλάσμα τὸ πῆλινον, Hippolytus, *op. cit.* Bk v. c. 7, p. 153, Cruice.

<sup>2</sup> This is certainly the opinion of the sect responsible for one of the later documents of the *Pistis Sophia*. See *Pistis Sophia*, pp. 346, 347, Copt. So Rossi's *Trattato gnostico*, before quoted, speaks throughout of Satan or the chief of the powers of evil as the ἀρχηπλασμα "originator of the form" ?

<sup>3</sup> Hippolytus, see n. 1, *supra*.

<sup>4</sup> Hippolytus, *op. cit.* Bk v. c. 7, p. 144, Cruice.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* Bk v. c. 8, pp. 157-173, Cruice.

<sup>6</sup> Son of Saturn, son of Jove  
Or born of mighty Rhea's love.  
Holy name, that sounds so dear  
To that ancient Rhea's ear.

explanation made doubly hard for us by our ignorance of what really took place in the rites the Ophite writer describes, or of any clear account of his own tenets, he seems to say that the many apparently obscene and sensual scenes that he alludes to, cover the doctrine that man's soul is part of the universal soul diffused through Nature and eventually to be freed from all material contact and united to the Deity; whence it is only those who abstain from the practice of carnal generation who can hope to be admitted to the highest heaven<sup>1</sup>. All this is illustrated by many quotations not only from the heathen poets and philosophers, but also from the Pentateuch, the Psalms, the Jewish Prophets, and from the Canonical Gospels and St Paul's Epistles.

Thee the old Assyrians [read Syrians] all  
 The thrice-wept Adonis call.  
 To thee for name has Egypt given  
 The holy horned moon of heaven [Osiris].  
 Thou the serpent-god of Greece  
 The 'all revered Adam thou of Samothrace.  
 Thee the Lydians, Phrygians thee,  
 Invoke, the Corybantic deity.  
 Thee Pappas now and now the dead,  
 Now lifting up reborn the god-like head.  
 Unfruitful now or barren desert brown,  
 Now the rich golden harvest mowing down.  
 Or whom the blossoming almond-tree  
 Brought forth on the free hills the piper wild to be.

Attis, old Rhea's son I sing  
 Not with the wild bell's clashing ring  
 Nor Ida's fife, in whose shrill noise  
 The old Curetae still rejoice;  
 But with the mingling descant sweet  
 Of Phoebus' harp, so soft, so sweet,  
 Evan! Evan! Pan, I call!  
 Evan the wild Bacchanal:  
 Or that bright Shepherd that on high  
 Folds the white stars up in the silent sky.

*Quarterly Review*, June, 1851.

<sup>1</sup> πάνυ γὰρ πικρῶς καὶ πεφυλαγμένως παραγγέλλουσιν ἀπέχεσθαι ὡς ἀποκεκομμένοι τῆς πρὸς γυναῖκα ὁμιλίας. "For they very strictly enjoin that their followers should abstain, as if they were castrated, from accompanying with women," Hippolytus, *op. cit.* Bk v. c. 9, p. 177, Cruice.

The connection of such a system with orthodox Christianity seems at first sight remote enough, but it must be remembered that Hippolytus was not endeavouring to explain or record the Ophite beliefs as a historian would have done, but to hold them up to ridicule and, as he describes it, to "refute" them. Yet there can be no doubt that the Ophites were Christians or followers of Christ who accepted without question the Divine Mission of Jesus, and held that only through Him could they attain salvation. The difference between them and the orthodox in respect to this was that salvation was not, according to them, offered freely to all, but was on the contrary a magical result following automatically upon complete initiation and participation in the Mysteries<sup>1</sup>. Texts like "Strait is the way and narrow is the gate that leadeth into eternal life" and "Not every one that saith unto me Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven" were laid hold of by them as showing that complete salvation was confined to a few highly instructed persons, who had had the sense to acquire the knowledge of the nature of the Deity and of the topography of the heavenly places which underlay the ceremonies of the Mysteries. Such an one, they said after his death would be born again not with a fleshly but with a spiritual body and passing through the gate of heaven would become a god<sup>2</sup>. It does not follow, however, that those who did not obtain this perfect *gnosis* would be left, as in some later creeds, to reprobation. The cry of "all things in heaven, on earth, and below the earth"<sup>3</sup> that the discord of this world<sup>4</sup> might be made to cease, which

<sup>1</sup> Τουτέστι, φησίν, οὐδείς τούτων τῶν μυστηρίων ἀκροῦντος γέγονεν εἰ μὴ μόνου οἱ γνωστικοὶ τέλειαι. "This he (the Naassene writer) says signifies that none was a hearer of these mysteries save only the perfect Gnostics," Hippolytus, *op. cit.* Bk v. c. 8, p. 144, Cruice. The "this" refers to the text: "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear."

<sup>2</sup> ἐκ τῶν σωμάτων τῶν χοϊκῶν ἀναγεννηθέντες πνευματικοὶ οὐ σαρκικοί "being born again from the earthly body, not as fleshly but as spiritual men" . . . . . Οἱ δὲ αὐτοί, φησί, Φρύγες τὸν αὐτὸν πάλιν ἐκ μεταβολῆς λέγουσι θεόν. "For the Phrygians themselves declare, he says, that he who is ihus reborn is by reason of the change a god," Hippolytus, *op. cit.* Bk v. c. 8, pp. 165, 166, Cruice. Cf. Berger, *Études*, etc. p. 27.

<sup>3</sup> τῶν ἐπουρανίων καὶ ἐπιγείων καὶ καταχθονίων.

<sup>4</sup> τὴν ἀσυμφωνίαν τοῦ κόσμου.



the Naassene author quoted by Hippolytus daringly connects with the name of Pappas given by the Phrygians to Sabazius or Dionysos, would one day be heard, and the Apocatastasis or return of the world to the Deity would then take place<sup>1</sup>. If we may judge from the later developments of the Ophite teaching this was to be when the last spiritual man (πνευματικός) or perfect Gnostic had been withdrawn from it. In the meantime those less gifted would after death pass through the planetary worlds of Ialdabaoth until they arrived at his heaven or sphere, and would then be sent down to the earth to be reincarnated in other bodies. Whether those who had attained some knowledge of the Divine nature without arriving at perfect Gnosis would or would not be rewarded with some sort of modified beatitude or opportunity of better instruction is not distinctly stated, but it is probable that the Ophites thought that they would<sup>2</sup>. For just as those who have been admitted into the Lesser Mysteries at Eleusis ought to pause and then be admitted into the "great and heavenly ones," the progress of the Ophite towards the Deity must be progressive. They who participate in these heavenly mysteries, says the Naassene author, receive greater destinies than the others<sup>3</sup>.

It might seem, therefore, that the Mysteries or secret rites of the heathens contained in themselves all that was necessary for redemption, and this was probably the Ophite view so far as the return of the universe to the bosom of the Deity and the consequent wiping out of the consequences of the unfortunate fall of Sophia or Prunicos were concerned. A tradition preserved by Irenaeus says that Sophia herself "when she had received a desire for the light above her, laid down the body she had received from matter—which was, as we have

<sup>1</sup> Hippolytus, *op. et loc. cit.* p. 165, Cruice.

<sup>2</sup> The Naassene writer says that the peace preached "to those that are afar off" of Ephesians ii. 17, refers to τοῖς ὕλικοῖς καὶ χοϊκοῖς "to the material and earthly," and that "to those that are near" to τοῖς πνευματικοῖς καὶ νοεοῖς τελείοις ἀνθρώποις "to the spiritual and understanding perfect men." Hippolytus, *op. et loc. cit.*

<sup>3</sup> Hippolytus, *op. cit.* Bk v. c. 8, pp. 172, 173, Cruice.

seen, the visible heaven—and was freed from it<sup>1</sup>.” But this seems to be an addition which is not found in the Greek version, and is probably taken from some later developments of the Ophite creed. It is plain, however, that the whole scheme of nature as set forth in the opinions summarized above is represented as contrived for the winning-back of the light—for which we may, if we like, read life—from matter, and this is represented as the work of Sophia herself. The futile attempt of the arrogant and jealous Ialdabaoth to prolong his rule by the successive creation of world after world, of the archetypal or rather protoplasmic Adam, and finally of Eve, whereby the light is dispersed through matter more thoroughly but in ever-diminishing portions<sup>2</sup>, is turned against him by his mother Sophia, the beneficent ruler of the planetary worlds, who even converts acquaintance with the “carnal generation” which he has invented into a necessary preparation for the higher mysteries<sup>3</sup>. Thus Hippolytus tells us that the Naassenes

“frequent the so-called mysteries of the Great Mother, thinking that through what is performed there, they see clearly the whole mystery. For they have no complete advantage from the things there performed except that they are not castrated. [Yet] they fully accomplish the work of the castrated [*i.e.* the Galli]. For they most strictly and carefully preach that one should abstain

<sup>1</sup> *Cum accepisset concupiscentiam superioris luminis, et virtutem sumpsisset per omnia, deposuisse corpus et liberatam ab eo.* Irenaeus, Bk I. c. 28, p. 229, Harvey. As he goes on to say: *Corpus autem hoc exuisse dicunt eam, foeminam a foemina nominant*, it is plain that he is here referring to the Third or Lower Sophia who was one of the personages in the Valentinian drama and unknown, so far as we can tell, to the Ophites. The Latin translator is no doubt responsible for this confusion.

<sup>2</sup> That this was the object of Ialdabaoth in creating Eve is plain from Irenaeus' Latin text (Bk I. c. 28, p. 233, Harvey): *Zelantem autem Ialdabaoth voluisse excogitare evacuare hominem per foeminam, et de sua Enthy-mesi eduxisse foeminam, quam illa Prunicos suscipiens invisibiliter evacuavit a virtute.* He then goes on to relate the seduction of the archons which plays so large a part in the Enochian literature, and which is made Sophia's contrivance for nullifying the command to “Increase and multiply” in Genesis.

<sup>3</sup> τὰ μὴ μυστήρια τὰ τῆς σαρκικῆς γενέσεως: Hippolytus, *op. cit.* Bk v. c. 8, p. 172, Cruice.

from all companying with woman, as do the castrated. And the rest of the work, as we have said at length, they perform like the castrated<sup>1</sup>."

So far, then, as the general scheme of the redemption of light from matter is concerned, there seems to have been no fundamental necessity in the Ophite view for the Mission of Jesus. But they assigned to Him a great and predominant part in hastening the execution of the scheme, and thus bringing about the near approach of the kingdom of heaven. We have seen that Sophia provided in spite of Ialdabaoth for the birth of the man Jesus from the Virgin Mary, and the Naassene author said that

"into this body of Jesus there withdrew and descended things intellectual, and psychic, and earthly: and these three Men (*i.e.* the First Man, the Son of Man, and Christos) speak together through Him each from his proper substance unto those who belong to each<sup>2</sup>."

The Latin text of Irenaeus amplifies the statement considerably and says that Prunicus, as it calls Sophia, finding no rest in heaven or earth, invoked the aid of her mother the First Woman. This power, having pity on her repentance, implored the First Man to send Christos to her assistance. This prayer was granted, and Christos descended from the Pleroma to his sister Sophia, announced his coming through John the Baptist, prepared the baptism of repentance, and beforehand fashioned Jesus, so that when Christos came down he might find a pure vessel, and that by Ialdabaoth her own son, the "woman" might be announced by Christ. The author quoted by Irenaeus goes on to say that Christ descended through each of the seven heavens or planetary worlds in the likeness of its inhabitants, and thus took away much of their power. For the sprinkling of light scattered among them rushed to him, and when he came down into this world he clothed his sister Sophia with it, and they exulted over each other, which they (the Ophites) "describe as the [meeting of] the bridegroom and the bride."

<sup>1</sup> Hippolytus, *op. cit.* Bk v. c. 9, p. 177, Cruice.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* Bk v. c. 6, p. 140, Cruice.

But "Jesus being begotten from the Virgin by the operation of God was wiser, purer, and juster than all men. Christos united to Sophia descended into Him [on His baptism] and so Jesus Christ was made<sup>1</sup>."

Jesus then began to heal the sick, to announce the unknown Father, and to reveal Himself as the Son of the first man. This angered the princes of the planetary worlds and their progenitor, Ialdabaoth, who contrived that He should be killed. As He was being led away for this purpose, Christos with Sophia left Him for the incorruptible aeon<sup>2</sup> or highest heaven. Jesus was crucified; but Christos did not forget Him and sent a certain power to Him, who raised Him in both a spiritual and psychic body, sending the worldly parts back into the world. After His Resurrection, Jesus remained upon earth eighteen months, and perception descending into Him taught what was clear. These things He imparted to a few of his disciples whom He knew to be capable of receiving such great mysteries, and He was then received into heaven. Christos sate down at the right hand of Ialdabaoth that he might, unknown to this last, take to himself the souls of those who have known these mysteries, after they have put off their worldly flesh. Thus Ialdabaoth cannot in future hold holy souls that he may send them down again into the age [*i.e.* this aeon]; but only those which are from his own substance, that is, which he has

<sup>1</sup> Irenaeus, Bk I. c. 28, § 6, p. 238, Harvey. The section is given almost word for word as in Irenaeus; but it is manifestly taken from some other source than that of the Greek text, and is inconsistent with the rest of the story. If the Lower Sophia or Prunicos (the Substitute) were born from the mere boiling over of the light shed upon her mother, of what had she to "repent"? In the *Pistis Sophia*, indeed, the heroine wins her way back to her former estate by repentance, but *her* fall has been occasioned by disobedience and ambition. So, too, the story about Jesus changing His form on His descent through the seven heavens is common to the story of *Pistis Sophia* and the legend of Simon Magus, which two it therefore connects (see Chapter VI, vol. I. p. 191, n. 4). It also appears in the *Ascension of Isaiah* which Mr Charles thinks may be dated about 150 A.D. (see Charles, *Ascension of Isaiah*, 1900, pp. xi and 62), but which is probably of much later date. There are other features to be noted in their place common to the *Pistis Sophia* and the last named work.

<sup>2</sup> That is to say, that which does not perish and return to the Deity.

himself breathed into bodies. When all the sprinkling of light is thus collected, it will be taken up into the incorruptible aeon. The return to Deity will then be complete, and matter will probably be destroyed. In any case, it will have lost the light which alone gives it life<sup>1</sup>.

What rites or form of worship were practised by these Ophites we do not know, although Epiphanius preserves a story that they were in the habit of keeping a tame serpent in a chest which at the moment of the consecration of their Eucharist was released and twined itself round the consecrated bread<sup>2</sup>. Probably the very credulous Bishop of Constantia was misled by some picture or amulet depicting a serpent with his tail in its mouth surrounding an orb or globe which represents the mundane egg of the Orphics. In this case the serpent most likely represented the external ocean which the ancients thought surrounded the habitable world like a girdle. But the story, though probably untrue, is some evidence that the later Ophites used, like all post-Christian Gnostics, to practise a ceremony resembling the Eucharist, and certainly administered also the rite of baptism which is alluded to above in the tale of the descent of Christos. Hippolytus also tells us that they used to sing many hymns to the First Man; and he gives us a "psalm" composed by

<sup>1</sup> Irenaeus, Bk I. c. 28, § 7, pp. 238-241, Harvey. This again is given almost *verbatim*. The stay of Jesus on earth after His Resurrection, and His teaching His disciples "quod liquidum est," that is, without parable, is also told in the *Pistis Sophia*, but His post-Resurrection life is there put at 12 years. Irenaeus' Latin translator has, as has been said, evidently here got hold of some later developments of Ophitism not known to his author at the time that the Greek text was written. Yet some tradition of a long interval between the Resurrection and the Ascension was evidently current in the sub-Apostolic age. Irenaeus himself says on the authority of "those who met with John the Disciple of the Lord in Asia" that Jesus' ministry only lasted for one year from His Baptism, He being then 30 years old, and that He suffered on completing his 30th year; yet that He taught until He was 40 or 50 years old. See Irenaeus, Bk II. c. 33, § 3, p. 331, Harvey. Some part of this statement appears in the Greek text.

<sup>2</sup> Epiphanius, *Haer.* xxxvii. c. 5, p. 502, Oehler. Epiphanius, although generally untrustworthy, had been, as M. de Faye reminds us, a Nicolaitan in his youth. See de Faye, *Introd.* p. 116.

them which, as he thinks, "comprehends all the mysteries of their error<sup>1</sup>." Unfortunately in the one text of the *Philosophumena* which we have, it is given in so corrupt a form that the first German editor declared it to be incapable of restoration. It may perhaps be translated thus:

The generic law of the Whole was the first Intelligence of all  
 The second[creation?] was the poured-forth Chaos of the First-born  
 And the third and labouring soul obtains the law as her portion  
 Wherefore clothed in watery form [Behold]  
 The loved one subject to toil [and] death  
 Now, having lordship, she beholds the Light  
 Then cast forth to piteous state, she weeps.  
 Now she weeps and now rejoices  
 Now she weeps and now is judged  
 Now she is judged and now is dying  
 Now no outlet is found, the unhappy one  
 Into the labyrinth of woes has wandered.  
 But Jesus said: Father, behold!  
 A strife of woes upon earth  
 From thy spirit has fallen  
 But he [*i.e.* man?] seeks to fly the malignant chaos  
 And knows not how to break it up.  
 For his sake, send me, O Father;  
 Having the seals, I will go down  
 Through entire aeons I will pass,  
 All mysteries I will open  
 And the forms of the gods I will display,  
 The secrets of the holy Way  
 Called knowledge [Gnosis], I will hand down.

It is probable that this psalm really did once contain a summary of the essential parts of the Ophite teaching. In whatever way we may construe the first three lines, which were probably misunderstood by the scribe of the text before us, there can hardly be a doubt that they disclose a triad of three powers engaged in the work of salvation<sup>2</sup>. The fall of Sophia

<sup>1</sup> Hippolytus, *op. cit.* Bk v. c. 10, pp. 182-184, Cruice.

<sup>2</sup> Cruice, *op. et loc. cit.* p. 152, n. 3, remarks that the Supreme Triad here shown is τὸ νοερόν, τὸ χοϊκόν, τὸ ψυχικόν "the intellectual, the earthly, and the psychic or animal." This may be; but there is no

seems also to be alluded to in unmistakable terms, while the Mission of Jesus concludes the poem. Jesus, not here distinguished from the Christos or Heavenly Messenger of the Trinity, is described as sent to the earth for the purpose of bringing hither certain "mysteries" which will put man on the sacred path of Gnosis and thus bring about the redemption of his heavenly part from the bonds of matter. These "mysteries" were, as appears in Hippolytus and elsewhere, sacraments comprising baptism, unction, and a ceremony at least outwardly resembling the Christian Eucharist or Lord's Supper<sup>1</sup>. These had the magical effect, already attributed by the Orphics to their own homophagous feast, of changing the recipient's place in the scale of being and transforming him *ipso facto* into something higher than man. That the celebration of these mysteries was attended with the deepest secrecy accounts at once for their being nowhere described in detail by Hippolytus' Ophite author, and also for the stories which were current among all the heresiological writers of filthy and obscene rites<sup>2</sup>. Fortified by these mysteries, and by the abstinences and the continence which they entailed—at all events theoretically, and as a counsel of perfection—the Ophite could attend, as we have seen, all the ceremonies of the still pagan Anatolians or of the Christian Church indifferently, conscious that he alone understood the inner meaning of either.

Another practice of the Ophites has accidentally come down to us which deserves some mention. The division of the universe into three parts, *i.e.* angelic, psychic, and earthly, which we have already seen in germ in the system of Simon

proof that the Ophites ever gave Chaos or unformed Matter a place in it, or made it the next principle to their Supreme Being. Probably for the supposed "Chaos" in the second line of the Psalm should be substituted some words like "the projected Thought" of the Father. Miller has some curious remarks quoted in the same note on the metre of the Psalm, which he points out is the same as in a poem of Lucian's, and in the hymns of Synesius, Bishop of Ptolemais, already mentioned.

<sup>1</sup> Hippolytus, *op. cit.* Bk v. c. 7, p. 148; *ibid.* c. 9, p. 181, Cruice. They probably resembled the ceremonies described at length in the *Pistis Sophia* and the *Bruce Papyrus*. See Chapter X, *infra*.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 18 *supra*.

Magus, was by the Ophites carried so much further than by him that it extended through the whole of nature, and seriously affected their scheme of redemption. Father Giraud, as we have seen, goes so far as to say that in the opinion of Naassenes, matter hardly existed, and that they thought that not only did Adamas, or the first man, enter into all things, but that in their opinion all things were contained within him<sup>1</sup>. This pantheistic doctrine may have been current in Phrygia and traces of it may perhaps be found in the Anatolian worship of nature; but the words of the Naassene psalm quoted above show that the Naassenes, like all the post-Christian Gnostics of whom we know anything, ~~thought that matter not only had an independent existence, but was essentially malignant and opposed to God.~~ They divided, as we have seen, the universe which came forth from Him into three parts of which the angelic, noëtic, or pneumatic included, apparently, nothing but the Pleroma or Fulness of the Godhead consisting of the Trinity of Father, Son and Mother with their messenger Christos. Then followed the second, psychic, or planetary world, containing the heaven of Sophia with beneath it the holy hebdomad or seven worlds of Ialdabaoth and his descendants<sup>2</sup>. Below this came, indeed, the choïc, earthly, or terrestrial world, containing some sparks of the light bestowed upon it consciously by Sophia and unconsciously by Ialdabaoth, and inhabited by mortal men. But this world was the worst example of the "discord" (*ἀσυμφωνία*), or as it was called later, the "confusion" (*κέρασμος*), caused by the mingling of light with matter, and as such was doomed to extinction and to eternal separation from the Divine<sup>3</sup>. In like manner, the soul of man consisted of three

<sup>1</sup> Giraud, *op. cit.* p. 95.

<sup>2</sup> Sanctam autem hebdomadam septem stellas, quas dicunt planetas, esse volunt. Irenaeus, Bk i. c. 28, § 5, p. 236, Harvey.

<sup>3</sup> Hippolytus, *op. cit.* Bk v. c. 8, p. 159, Cruice, says that the "nothing" said in John i. 3, 4 to have been made without the Word is in fact this world. *Τὸ δὲ "οὐδέν," ὃ χωρὶς αὐτοῦ γέγονεν, ὁ κόσμος ἰδικός ἐστιν· γέγονεν γὰρ χωρὶς αὐτοῦ ὑπὸ τρίτου καὶ τετάρτου.* "But the 'nothing' which came into being without Him is the world of form; for it came into being without Him by the Third and Fourth"—these last being evidently Sophia and Jaldabaoth respectively.



parts corresponding to the three worlds, that is to say, the pneumatic, psychic, and earthly; and of these three, the last was doomed to extinction. Only by laying aside his earthly part as Jesus had done and becoming entirely pneumatic, could man attain to the light and become united with the Godhead. But to do so, his soul must first pass from choic to psychic and thence to pneumatic, or, as the Naassene author quoted by Hippolytus puts it, must be born again and must enter in at the gate of heaven<sup>1</sup>.

This rebirth or passage of the soul from the choic to the psychic, and thence to the pneumatic, was, as has been said, the work of the mysteries, especially of those new ones which the Ophite Jesus or Christos had brought to earth with Him from above. The process by which these "changes of the soul" were brought about was, according to the Naassenes, "set forth in the Gospel according to the Egyptians<sup>2</sup>." The only quotation pertinent to the matter which we have from this lost work is one preserved for us by Clement of Alexandria which refers to the coming of a heavenly age "when the two shall be made one, and the male with the female neither male nor female<sup>3</sup>"—a saying which seems to refer to the time when all the light now scattered among the lower worlds shall return to the androgyne Adamas from whom it once issued. But it is probable that this gospel only described the upward passage of the soul in figures and parables probably conveyed in texts of the Canonical Gospel divorced from their context and their natural meaning, as in the Naassene author quoted by Hippolytus. Such a gospel might be a sufficient means of instruction

<sup>1</sup> Οὐ δύναται ὁὖν, φησι, σωθῆναι ὁ τέλειος ἄνθρωπος, ἐὰν μὴ ἀναγεννηθῇ διὰ ταύτης εἰσελθὼν τῆς πύλης. "The perfect [or initiated] man, he says, therefore cannot be saved unless he be born again, entering in through this gate." Hippolytus, *op. cit.* Bk v. c. 8, p. 165, Cruice.

<sup>2</sup> Hippolytus, *op. cit.* Bk v. c. 7, p. 144, Cruice.

<sup>3</sup> Clem. Alex. *Strom.* Bk III. c. 13, and n. 2, p. 196, Chapter VI, vol. I. The οὔτε ἄρρεν οὔτε θῆλυ of this passage and of Clement's Second Epistle to the Romans (Hilgenfeld, *N.T. extra canon.* pt I, p. 79) is compared by the Naassene author (Hipp. *op. cit.* Bk v. c. 7, p. 146, Cruice) with the emasculation of Attis, which is made a type of the soul "passing from the material parts of the lower creation to the eternal substance above."

for the living, who could puzzle out its meaning with the help of their mystagogues or priests<sup>1</sup>; but it must always have been difficult for the best-instructed to remember the great complications of worlds, planets, and celestial powers that lay at the root of it. How difficult then must it have been thought for the disembodied soul to find its way through the celestial places, and to confront the "guardians of the gate" of each with proof of his exalted rank in the scale of being? What was wanted was some guide or clue that the dead could take with him like the *Book of the Dead* of the ancient Egyptians, some memory or survival of which had evidently come down to the Alexandrian worship<sup>2</sup>, or like the gold plates which we have seen fulfilling the same office among the worshippers of the Orphic gods<sup>3</sup>.

That the Ophites possessed such documents we have proof from the remarks of the Epicurean Celsus, who may have flourished in the reign of Hadrian (A.D. 117—138)<sup>4</sup>. In his attack on Christianity called *The True Discourse*, he charges the Christians generally with possessing a "diagram" in which the passage of the soul after death through the seven heavens is portrayed. Origen, in refuting this Epicurean's arguments more than a century later, denies that the Church knew anything of such a diagram, and transfers the responsibility for it to what he calls "a very insignificant sect called Ophites<sup>5</sup>." He

<sup>1</sup> The Naassenes had priests. Οἱ οὖν ἱερεῖς καὶ προστάται τοῦ δόγματος γεγέννηται πρῶτοι οἱ ἐπικληθέντες Ναασσηνοί. "The priests and chiefs of the doctrine have been the first who were called Naassenes." Hippolytus, *op. cit.* Bk v. c. 6, p. 139, Cruice. Cf. also p. 77; *infra*.

<sup>2</sup> As we have seen, Aelius Aristides says the devotees of the Alexandrian gods used to bury holy books in their tombs. See Chapter II, vol. i. p. 60, *supra*.

<sup>3</sup> See Chapter IV, *supra*.

<sup>4</sup> I have taken the earliest date for which there is any probability, because it was in Hadrian's time that most of the great Gnostics taught, and their speculations would therefore have been most likely to come to heathen ears. Keim, *Celsus Wahres Wort*, Zürich, 1873, however, makes the date of the book 177—178 A.D., and this seems supported by the latest critics. See Patrik, *Apology of Origen*, 1892, p. 9, where the question is thoroughly examined.

<sup>5</sup> Origen, *cont. Cels.* Bk vi. c. 24.

further says that he has himself seen this diagram and he gives a detailed description of it sufficient to enable certain modern writers to hazard a guess as to what it must have looked like<sup>1</sup>. It seems to have been chiefly composed of circles, those in the uppermost part—which Celsus says were those “above the heavens”—being two sets of pairs. Each pair consisted of two concentric circles, one pair being inscribed, according to Origen, Father-and-Son, and according to Celsus, “a greater and a less” which Origen declares means the same thing<sup>2</sup>. By the side of this was the other pair, the outer circle here being coloured yellow and the inner blue; while between the two pairs was a barrier drawn in the form of a double-bladed axe<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> See Matter, *Histoire du Gnosticisme*, Paris, 1843, Pl. III, and Giraud, *op. cit.* Pl. facing p. 238.

<sup>2</sup> Origen, *cont. Cels.* Bk VI. c. 38. The fact is significant as showing that the Ophites considered the Son as contained *within* the Father.

<sup>3</sup> ἐπιγεγραμμένον διάφραγμα πελεκαιοιδεῖ σχήματι, Origen, *op. et loc. cit.* The *πέλεκυς* or double-bladed axe was the symbol of Zeus Labrandos of Caria, and is often met with on the coins of Asia Minor, while it seems to have played a prominent part in the worship of Minoan Crete and in Mycenae. See Arthur Evans, *Mycenaeen Tree and Pillar Cult*, 1901, pp. 8–12. Ramsay, *Cities*, etc., i. c. 91, thinks that Savazos or Sabazios was called in Phrygia Lairbenos, which may be connected with the word *Labrys* said to be the name of the double axe. He found a god with this weapon worshipped together with Demeter or Cybele in the Milyan country, *op. cit.* pp. 263, 264, and he thinks the pair appear under the different names of Leto, Artemis, Cybele, and Demeter on the one hand, and Apollo, Lairbenos, Sabazios, Men, and Attis on the other throughout Asia Minor. He points out, however, that they were only the male and female aspects of a single divinity (*op. cit.* 93, 94). Is it possible that this is the explanation of the double axe as a divine symbol? The axe with one blade was the ordinary Egyptian word-sign for a god (see *P.S.B.A.* 1899, pp. 310, 311) and the double axe might easily mean a god with a double nature. If this idea were at all prevalent in Anatolia at the beginning of our era, it would explain Simon Magus' mysterious allusion to the flaming sword of Genesis iii. 24, “which turns both ways to guard the Tree of Life,” and is somehow connected with the division of mankind into sexes. See Hippolytus, *op. cit.* Bk VI. c. 17, p. 260, Cruice. A very obscure Coptic text which its discoverer, M. de Mély, calls “Le Livre des Cyranides” (*C. R. de l'Acad. des Inscriptions*, Mai-Juin, 1904, p. 340) gives a hymn to the vine said to be sung in the Mysteries of Bacchus in which the “mystery of the axe” is mentioned.

"Above this last" Origen says "was a smaller circle inscribed 'Love,' and below it another touching it with the word 'Life.' And on the second circle, which was intertwined with and included two other circles, another figure like a rhomboid 'The Forethought of Sophia.' And within their (?) point of common section was 'the Nature of Sophia.' And above their point of common section was a circle, on which was inscribed 'Knowledge,' and lower down another on which was the inscription 'Comprehension'.<sup>1</sup>"

There is also reference made by Origen to "The Gates of Paradise," and a flaming sword depicted as the diameter of a flaming circle and guarding the tree of knowledge and of life; but nothing is said of their respective places in the diagram.

Jacques Matter, whose *Histoire Critique du Gnosticisme* appeared in 1843, without its author having the benefit of becoming acquainted with Hippolytus' *Philosophumena*, which tells us so much as to the doctrines of the Naassenes or early Ophites, and Father Giraud, who has on the contrary drawn largely from it, and whose dissertation on the Ophites was published in 1884, have both given pictorial representations of the Ophite diagram. Although they differ somewhat in the arrangement of the circles, both are agreed that the blue and yellow circles signify the Holy Spirit and Christos. The Pleroma or Fulness of the Godhead consisting of Father, Son and Holy Spirit, with the Christos their messenger, therefore seems figured in these two pairs of circles. Both Matter and Father Giraud also arrange four other circles labelled respectively Knowledge, Nature, Wisdom, and Comprehension (Γνώσις, Φύσις, Σοφία, and Σύνεσις) within one large one with a border of intertwined lines which they call the Forethought of Sophia (Πρόνοια Σοφίας). This may be the correct rendering, but it is hardly warranted by Origen's words given above, nor do we know of any powers, aeons, or other entities in the Ophite system called Gnosis or Physis<sup>2</sup>. In any event, however, it

<sup>1</sup> Origen, *op. et loc. cit.* The names of the circles, etc., in the original are from above downwards: 'Αγάπη, Ζωή, Πρόνοια Σοφίας, Γνώσις, Σοφία, Φύσις, and Σύνεσις.

<sup>2</sup> Gnosis does appear in the Naassene Psalm given in this Chapter, but only as the name of the "Holy Way."

is fairly clear that this part of the diagram represents the Sophia who fell from the Holy Spirit into matter, and that her natural or first place should be the heaven stretched out above the seven planetary worlds. Yet Irenaeus tells us that the Ophites he describes thought that Sophia succeeded finally in struggling free from the body of matter and that the super-planetary firmament represented merely the lifeless shell she had abandoned<sup>1</sup>. This is, perhaps, the view taken by the framers of the diagram.

However that may be, Origen's discourse agrees with Celsus in describing a "thick black line marked Gehenna or Tartarus" which cuts, as he says, the diagram in two. This is specially described by Celsus; and if it surprises anyone to find it thus placed above the planetary heavens, it can only be said that later Gnostics, including those who are responsible for the principal documents of the *Pistis Sophia* to be presently mentioned, put one of the places where souls were tortured in "the 'Middle Way'" which seems *above*, and not, like the classical Tartarus, *below* the earth<sup>2</sup>. Below this again, come the seven spheres of the planets dignified by the names of Horaïos, Ailoaios, Astaphaios, Sabaoth, Iao, Ialdabaoth and Adonai respectively. These names are, indeed, those given in Irenaeus as the names of the descendants of Sophia, although the order there given is different. As to the meaning of them, Origen declares that Ialdabaoth, Horaïos, and Astaphaios are taken from magic and that the others are (the Hebrew) names of God<sup>3</sup>. But it should be noticed that Origen is in this place silent as to their situation in the diagram, and that those assigned

<sup>1</sup> See n. 1, p. 58 *supra*.

<sup>2</sup> In this it is following strictly the tradition of the Enochian literature. "And we ascended to the firmament, I and he, and there I saw Sammael and his hosts, and there was great fighting therein and the angels of Satan were envying one another." Charles, *Ascension of Isaiah*, c. vii. v. 9, p. 48. and Editor's notes for other references.

<sup>3</sup> Origen, *cont. Cels.* Bk vi. c. 32. Horaïos is probably connected with the root אור "light"; Astaphaios appears in the earliest texts as Astanpheus which may be an anagram for στέφανος "crown." Or it may be השטבה "inundation" which would agree with Origen's statement as to this being the principle of water, for which see p. 73 *infra*.

to them in Matter's and Father Giraud's reconstructions are taken from the prayers or "defences" which will be given independently of it.

The division which Matter calls "Atmosphère terrestre" and Father Giraud "The Fence of Wickedness" (Φραγμὸς Κακίας) is also not to be found in Origen's description of the diagram, but is taken from another passage where he defines it as the gates leading to the aeon of the archons<sup>1</sup>. The remaining sphere, containing within itself ten circles in Matter's reconstruction and seven in Father Giraud's, is however fully described. The number ten is, as Matter himself admitted to be probable, a mistake of the copyist for seven<sup>2</sup>, and there can be no doubt that the larger sphere is supposed to represent our world. The word "Leviathan" which in accordance with Origen's description is written both at the circumference and at the centre of the circle<sup>3</sup> is evidently Ophiomorphus or the serpent-formed son of Ialdabaoth whom we have seen cast down to earth by his father together with the protoplasts Adam and Eve<sup>4</sup>. He should according to the later Gnostics be represented in the shape of a "dragon" or serpent coiled round the world and having his tail in his mouth, while the seven circles within the ring thus formed are the seven Archons or ruling spirits created by him in imitation of Ialdabaoth. These are represented in beast-like form and are, as we have seen, hostile to man. The first four have the Hebrew angelic names of Michael, Suriel, Raphael, and Gabriel, perhaps because

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.* Bk vi. c. 31.

<sup>2</sup> Unless we take the ten circles as including the three gates of Horaïos, Ailoaios, and Astaphaios. In this case, Jaldabaoth and his first three sons would alone form the higher part of the planetary world. This is unlikely, but if it were so, there would be an additional reason for calling Jaldabaoth, as does Irenaeus, a "fourth number." Theodore Bar Khôni, who wrote in the VIIIth century (see Chapter XIII, *infra*), in his notice of the Ophites gives the number of these heavens as ten. See Pognon, *Coupees de Khouabir*, Paris, 1898, p. 213.

<sup>3</sup> ἐπὶ τοῦ κύκλου καὶ τοῦ κέντρου αὐτοῦ κατέγραψε, Origen, *op. cit.* Bk vi. c. 25.

<sup>4</sup> Origen says, *loc. cit.*, that Leviathan is Hebrew for "Dragon." Cf. Ps. civ. 26.

the four planetary worlds to which they correspond bear also Hebrew names of God<sup>1</sup>. The remaining three Thauthabaoth, Erataoth, and Thartharaoth are probably taken from the peculiar corruption of Hebrew and Egyptian words to be found in the Magic Papyri. Some of them, at any rate, we meet again later. The word Behemoth which appears at the foot of the diagram may be translated "animals<sup>2</sup>." It may either be a further description of the seven Archons—as seems most likely—or be taken in its etymological sense as the animal kingdom which in the scale of being succeeds terrestrial man.

To this diagram, Origen adds the prayers or defences above alluded to, which he draws from some source not mentioned. He calls them the "instruction" which they (*i.e.* the Ophites) receive after passing through the "fence of wickedness,—gates which are subjected to the world of the Archons<sup>3</sup>"; but we know from other sources that they are the speeches, "defences" or passwords required to be uttered by the soul of the initiated when, released from this world by death, she flies upwards through the planetary spheres<sup>4</sup>. As they contain many instructive allusions, they can best be given in Origen's own words, at the same time remarking that the reading is not in all cases very well settled. The first power through whose realm the soul had to pass is not here mentioned by name,

<sup>1</sup> That is to say: Jaldabaoth; Iao, which is probably one of the many attempts to represent in Greek the Tetragrammaton יהוה called in English Jehovah; Ailoaios or Eloaios, the singular of the well-known plural name of God in Genesis אֱלֹהִים "Elohim"; and Adonai, אֲדֹנָי, "the Lord," which in many parts of the O.T. replaces the Tetragrammaton. Harvey, however, *op. cit.* p. 33, n. 3, thinks Iao may simply represent the initial of the name of Yahweh coupled with Alpha and Omega to show His eternal nature. He connects this with "I am the first and the last" of Isaiah xlv. 6, and Rev. i. 11. Yet the later Greeks called Dionysos Iao. See the (probably spurious) oracle of Apollo Clarius quoted by Macrobius, *Saturnalia*, Bk i. c. 18, ii. 19 *sqq.*

<sup>2</sup> Giraud, *op. cit.* p. 230.

<sup>3</sup> πύλας ἀρχόντων αἰῶνι δεδεμένas: Origen, *cont. Cels.* Bk vi. c. 31. Perhaps we should read διδομένas, "Gates which belong to the age of the Archons," *i.e.* while their rule lasts.

<sup>4</sup> See the quotation from the Gospel of Philip later in this chapter, p. 79, *infra*.

but by the process of exhaustion is plainly the one whom Irenaeus calls Adonaeus or Adonai.

To him the soul of the dead is to say :

"I salute the one-formed king, the bond of blindness, boundless oblivion, the first power preserved by the spirit of Pronoia and by Sophia; whence I am sent forth pure, being already part of the light of the Son and of the Father. Let grace be with me, O Father, yea let it be with me<sup>1</sup>!"

In passing through the next mentioned, which is the realm of Ialdabaoth :

"Thou O First and Seventh, born to command with boldness, Ialdabaoth the Ruler (Archon) who hast the word of pure Mind (*νοῦς*), a perfect work to the Son and the Father, I bring the symbol of life in the impress of a type, and open the door to the world which in thy aeon thou didst close, and pass again free through thy realm. Let grace be with me, O Father, yea let it be with me<sup>2</sup>!"

Arrived at Iao, he ought to say :

"Thou, O Second Iao and first lord of death, who dost rule over the hidden mysteries of the Son and the Father, who dost shine by night, part of the guiltless one. I bear my own beard as a symbol and am ready to pass through thy rule, having been strengthened by that which was born from thee by the living word. Let grace be with me, O Father, yea let it be with me<sup>3</sup>!"

<sup>1</sup> This appears to be the sphere of the Sun to which the epithet *μονότροπον* "one-formed" is not inappropriate. Why he should be called *δεσμὸν ἀβλεψίας* "bond of blindness," and *λήθην ἀπερίσκεπτον* "thoughtless oblivion," does not appear. *πρώτην δύναμιν πνεύματι προνοίας καὶ σοφίᾳ τηρουμένην* "the first power preserved," etc. coincides curiously with what is said in the *Pistis Sophia* as to the Ship of the Sun and the "Virgin of Light."

<sup>2</sup> This seems to be the sphere of Saturn, the furthest or 7th reckoning from the earth and therefore according to the astronomy of the time the nearest to the upper heavens. Was the symbol of life the Egyptian ♀ or *ankh*? It was of course the jealous Ialdabaoth's or Ialdabaoth's wish that no human souls should penetrate beyond his realm.

<sup>3</sup> So the *Pistis Sophia* speaks repeatedly of the "Little Iao the Good." This should be the sphere of the Moon. In the hymn to Attis given in this chapter, see n. 6, p. 54 *supra*, Attis-Dionysos-Osiris is identified with "the holy horned moon of heaven," and the name Iao may be connected



To Sabaoth :

"Ruler of the Fifth realm, King Sabaoth, advocate of the law of thy creation. I am freed by grace of a mightier Pentad. Admit me, when thou beholdest the blameless symbol of thy art preserved by the likeness of a type, a body set free by a pentad. Let grace be with me, O Father, yea let it be with me<sup>1</sup>!"

To Astaphaios :

"O Astaphaios, Ruler of the third gate, overseer of the first principle of water, behold me an initiate, admit me who have been purified by the spirit of a virgin, thou who seest the substance of the Cosmos. Let grace be with me, O Father, yea let it be with me<sup>2</sup>!"

To Ailaoios :

"O Ailaoios, ruler of the second gate, admit me who brings to thee the symbol of thy mother, a grace hidden from the powers of the

with the Coptic *ioz ioħ* or "moon." He may be called the *πρῶτος δεσπότης θανάτου* "first lord of death," because Osiris, like Dionysos, was the first to return to life after being torn in pieces. The *φέρων ἑδὴ τὴν ἰδίαν σύμβολον* "bearing my own beard as a symbol" seems to refer to the attitude of the Egyptian dead, who is represented as holding his beard in his right hand when introduced into the presence of Osiris. See Budge, *Book of the Dead*, 1898 (translation volume), frontispiece, or *Papyrus of Ani*, *ibi cit.*

<sup>1</sup> This may be the sphere of Jupiter, who in one of the later documents of the *Pistis Sophia* is made ruler of the *five* planets. Sabaoth is probably the Divine Name *צבאות* "[Lord of] Hosts" which the Greeks took for a proper name. It, like Iao, appears often in the later documents. The *πεντὰς δυνατωτέρα* "mightier Pentad" may refer to the Three Men (Adamas, his son, and Christos), and the Two Women (the First Woman and Sophia) placed at the head of the universe by the Ophites.

<sup>2</sup> This should be the sphere of Mercury, the messenger of the gods and leader of souls, who, unlike the higher powers, sees the earth from anigh and without veils. The *παρθένου πνεῦμα* "spirit of a Virgin" may be the Virgin of Light of the *Pistis Sophia*, who plays such an important part in the redemption of souls. Hippolytus' Naassene writer (Hipp. *op. cit.* Bk v. c. 9, p. 181, Cruice) speaks of Jesus as the true gate and talks in this connection of "Life-giving water" and of "we Christians celebrating the mystery in the third gate"—an allusion which is unintelligible at present, unless it refers to the waters of baptism.

authorities. Let grace be with me, O Father, yea let it be with me<sup>1</sup> !”

and to Horaïos :

“ O Horaïos, who didst fearlessly overleap the fence of fire receiving the rulership of the first gate, admit me when thou beholdest the symbol of thy power, engraved on the type of the Tree of Life, and formed by resemblance in the likeness of the Guiltless One. Let grace be with me, O Father, yea let it be with me<sup>2</sup> !”

These defences have evidently got out of their proper order, and have probably been a good deal corrupted as well<sup>3</sup>. But their form and general purport are mostly intelligible and show undoubted signs of Egyptian origin. They were therefore probably not the work of the earlier Ophites or Naassenes, but were most likely introduced when the Ophite doctrines began to leave their primitive seat in Phrygia and to spread westward into North Africa and the south-east of Europe. The diagram itself seems to be fairly expressive of the more ancient teaching and in particular the division of all things

<sup>1</sup> The sphere of Venus ? The planet is said in one of the later documents of the *Pistis Sophia* to be ruled by a power from “ Pistis Sophia, the daughter of Barbelo,” another name for the material antitype of the heavenly Sophia or Mother of Life, whom we shall meet with later.

<sup>2</sup> The sphere of Mars ? No allusion is made elsewhere to the *φραγμαὶν πυρὸς* “fence of fire”; but we do of course often hear of an empyrean or heaven of fire stretching over the earth. The *ζωὴς ἐύλον* is, according to both Origen and Celsus, the Cross; Origen, *op. cit.* Bk vi. cc. 34, 37.

<sup>3</sup> The proper order would appear to be :

- (1) Horaïos ♂ the guardian of the First Gate, *i.e.* that of Fire.
- (2) Ailoiōs ♀ the guardian of the Second Gate, *i.e.* that of Air.
- (3) Astaphaiōs ♂ the guardian of the Third Gate, *i.e.* that of Water.

Above these we have (4) Adonai the ☉ the first power as distinguished from mere porters or guardians of gates, (5) Iao the ☽ called in the password the second, and (6) and (7) Sabaoth ♃ and Jaldabaoth ♂ above all. This would about correspond with the astronomy of the time, which tried to put the sun in the centre of our system. But the relative places of Sabaoth, Jaldabaoth, and Ailoiōs are very uncertain, and Epiphanius in describing the Ophite sect whom he calls “ Gnostics ” says that some wished to make Jaldabaoth occupy the 6th heaven, and others Ailoiōs, called by him Elilaiōs, while giving the 7th to Sabaoth. Epiph. *Haer.* xxvi. c. 10, p. 174, Oehler.

below the Godhead into three parts. Thus we find in it the "middle space" or heaven of Sophia, itself perhaps the Paradise whence the protoplasts and Ophiomorphus were hurled, then the world of seven planets, and finally this earth under the government of Ophiomorphus' seven angels. To judge from Origen's remark that "they say there is a sympathy (*συμπάθεια*) between the Star Phaenon (*i.e.* Saturn) and the lion-like power (Michael)<sup>1</sup>," it is probable that the Ophites, like the Babylonian astrologers, looked upon the system of "correspondences," as it was afterwards called, as running through all nature in such a way that every world and every power inhabiting it was a reflection of the one above it<sup>2</sup>. That each world according to the Naassenes contained a "Church" or assembly of souls<sup>3</sup> is stated in the text quoted above, the "Captive" Church there mentioned being evidently composed of the souls still held in the grip of matter, the "Called" of those who had passed into the planetary worlds, and the "Chosen" of those who were purified enough to be admitted into the middle space or Paradise of Sophia<sup>4</sup>. That these last were thought to be eventually united with the Deity appears in some later developments of the Ophite faith, but the doctrine seems also to have been known to the Naassenes, since the author quoted by Hippolytus speaks of "the perfect gnostics" becoming

<sup>1</sup> Origen, *cont. Cels.* Bk VI. c. 31. If ♄ corresponds to Michael and also to Jaldabaoth, ♀ ought to do the like to Suriel and Iao, ♂ to Sabaoth (which would be appropriate enough) and to Raphael, the sun to Adonai and Gabriel, and so on. No system of correspondences, however, can be devised that does not break down on scrutiny. Sammael, which is here Michael's other name, is used in the *Ascensio Isaiae* (see Charles, *Ascension of Isaiah*, p. 6) as a name of Satan. But it may well be that good and bad spirits occupying corresponding places in the universe were sometimes called by the same names. So one of the documents of the *Pistis Sophia* speaks of an angel cryptically named Zarazaz "who is called by the demons after a strong demon of their own place, Maskelli": *Pistis Sophia*, p. 370, Copt.

<sup>2</sup> Though Babylonian in origin it must early have found its way into Egypt. See Maspero, *Ét. Égyptol.* II. p. 385 and Chapter VI, *supra*, vol. I. p. 183 and n. 3.

<sup>3</sup> Soul, perhaps, does not here mean anything more than animating principle, spark, or breath of life.

<sup>4</sup> See p. 42, *supra*.

“kingless” (that is, subject to no other being) and as appointed to “share in the Pleroma<sup>1</sup>.”

Of the amount of success which the speculations of the Ophites enjoyed we know very little. Origen, as we have seen, speaks of them as being in his day “an insignificant sect”; and we have no proof that their numbers were ever very large<sup>2</sup>. Father Giraud asserts on the faith of some of the smaller heresiologists and Conciliar Acts that they spread over the whole of Asia Minor, through Syria and Palestine into Egypt on the one hand, and, on the other, to Mesopotamia, Armenia, and even to India, and this is probably more or less correct<sup>3</sup>. But those who had actually read their writings, as Irenaeus and Hippolytus evidently had done, seem to have looked upon them more as the source of many later heresies than as formidable by their own numbers. Whether the Sethians with whom Irenaeus would identify them were really a subdivision of the Ophite sect may be doubted, because in Hippolytus’ account of the Sethian doctrines, the existence of Jesus is never mentioned or referred to, and there is some reason for thinking them a non-Christian sect<sup>4</sup>. But the heresies of the Peratae

<sup>1</sup> . . . τοὺς τελείους ἀβασιλεύτους γενέσθαι καὶ μετασχεῖν τοῦ πληρώματος, Hippolytus, *op. cit.* Bk v. c. 8, p. 168, Cruice. See also the same expression in n. 3, p. 41, *supra*.

<sup>2</sup> Origen’s testimony on this point can be the better relied on, because his good faith, unlike that of writers like Epiphanius, is above suspicion. He and Clement of Alexandria are the only two writers on Gnosticism among the Fathers to whom M. de Faye (*Introd.* p. 1) will allow “intelligence” and “impartialité.”

<sup>3</sup> He gives, *op. cit.* p. 79, a map showing their chief seats from the head of the Persian Gulf on the one hand to Crete and the Adriatic on the other.

<sup>4</sup> In the *Bruce Papyrus* mentioned in Chapter X, there is much said about a god called Sitheus, so that it is by no means certain that the Seth after whom they were named was the patriarch of Genesis. He might be the Egyptian Set, whose name is transliterated in the Magic Papyri as Σηθ. His appearance in Egypt first as the brother and then as the enemy of Osiris has never been fully accounted for. See “The Legend of Osiris,” *P.S.B.A.* for 1911, pp. 145 *seqq.* Epiphanius’ attempt in the *Panarion* (*Haer.* xxxix. c. 3, p. 524, Oehler) to connect the genealogy of Jesus with the Seth of Genesis is not even said to depend on the doctrines of the sect, and the whole chapter reads like an interpolation. Cf. Friedländer, *Vorchristliche jüdische Gnosticismus*, Göttingen, 1898, p. 25.

and of Justinus, which Hippolytus describes as not differing much from the Ophites, certainly resemble that which has been summarized above too closely for the resemblance to be accidental; while the same remark applies to those of the Barbeliotes and Cainites described by Irenaeus, and to the Gnostics, Archontics, and others of whom we read in Epiphanius' *Panarion*. Most of these sects seem to have flourished on the Eastern or Asiatic outskirts of the Roman Empire, although some of them probably had settlements also in Egypt, Greece, Crete, and Cyrene. As the first Ophites had contrived to make an amalgam of the fervent and hysterical worship of nature in Anatolia with the Jewish and Christian tenets, so no doubt these daughter sects contrived to fit in with them the legends of the local cults among which they found themselves. But such compromises were not likely to last long when the Catholic Church began to define and enforce the orthodox faith, and the Ophites seem to have been one of the first to succumb. In the vth century A.D., there were still Ophite "colleges" to be found in the province of Bithynia; for Theocritus and Evander, the bishops of Chalcedon and Nicomedia, "refuted" their leaders publicly with such effect, says Praedestinatus, that they afterwards broke into their "secret places" at the head of a furious mob, drove away their priests, killed the sacred serpents, and "delivered the people from that danger<sup>1</sup>." This is the last that we hear of them as an organized sect, and although Justinian in A.D. 530 thought right to include them by name in his law against heretics, it is probable that by then their opinions had long since passed into other forms<sup>2</sup>.

Probably one of the first changes to take place in the Ophite faith was the withdrawal into the background of the serpent worship which respect for the ancient cults of Asia Minor had imposed upon the earlier members of the sect. In the diagram, Ophiomorphus does not seem to have been depicted in his proper shape, although he may perhaps be identified with the Leviathan there shown as surrounding the terrestrial world. Those Ophites who wished to obtain

<sup>1</sup> Praedestinatus, *de Haeresibus*, Bk I. c. 17, p. 237, Oehler.

<sup>2</sup> Matter, *Hist. du Gnost.* t. II. p. 176.

proselytes among Christian catechumens no doubt felt the advisability of not insisting upon this conception, inasmuch as "the serpent" was the figure under which the Oriental Christians loved to allude to the Pagan worships which still opposed them in Asia Minor<sup>1</sup>. Hence there arose much confusion among the Ophites themselves as to the character of the serpent, and while some, according to Irenaeus, asserted that Sophia the mother of Ialdabaoth herself became the serpent<sup>2</sup>, Theodoret, a very late witness, thinks that the Ophites of his time held that Ophiomorphus, although originally the minister of Sophia, had gone over to the other side, and had become the enemy of mankind<sup>3</sup>. In this we may also, perhaps, see, if we will, the effect of Egyptian influence upon the earlier Ophite teaching; for in Egypt, the serpent Apep was always looked upon as the enemy of Râ, the Sun-god, who was rightly considered the great benefactor of humanity. It is no doubt due to the same influence that in one of the documents of the *Pistis Sophia*—one part of which, as will be seen later, was probably written for the furtherance of a late form of the Ophite heresy—the serpent, while keeping his place in the Cosmos as the great ocean which surrounds the earth, is transformed into the outer darkness of the Canonical Gospels, and described as a huge torture-chamber for the punishment of souls<sup>4</sup>. The same document shows us how the Ophites, while adopting all the ideas of their predecessors the Orphics as to the respective states of the initiated and uninitiated after death,—including therein their reincarnation, the draught from the lake of memory and the like—contrived to mix with them the current astrological ideas of the time which made all these events happen in an order determined by the motions of the stars<sup>5</sup>. This tendency, already visible in Hippolytus' time in the Ophite

<sup>1</sup> See *Acta Philippi* before quoted *passim*.

<sup>2</sup> Irenaeus, Bk i. c. 28, § 8, p. 241, Harvey. King, *Gnostics*, etc. p. 101, quotes from Tertullian, *de Praescript.*, "Serpentem magnificent in tantum ut etiam Christo praeferant," which sounds like an Ophite doctrine; but I have failed to verify the quotation.

<sup>3</sup> Theodoret, *Haer. Fab.* i. 24.

<sup>4</sup> *Pistis Sophia*, pp. 319, 320, Copt.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* p. 384, Copt.

sect which he calls the Peratae<sup>1</sup>, will, however, be better considered when we come to deal with the documents of the *Pistis Sophia* themselves.

There remains to be said that *the Gospel according to the Egyptians* mentioned above is the only apocryphal document that Hippolytus directly attributes to the earlier Ophites or Naassenes. The sects derived from them seem to have made use of a great number of others, among which we find a *Book of Baruch* otherwise unknown to us, *The Paraphrase of Seth*, the *Gospels of Nicodemus*, *Philip*, and *Thomas*, together with a *Gospel according to the Hebrews*, which may or may not have been identical with the one which Hippolytus calls that according to the Egyptians<sup>2</sup>. Of these, the first two are entirely lost, and the documents which we possess bearing the name of the Gospel of Nicodemus relate the events of the Crucifixion in much the same way as the Canonical Gospels, but add thereto the visit of Jesus to Hades. A *Gospel of Thomas*, which is also extant, contains only the account of miracles performed by Jesus in His infancy, and therefore goes to controvert the Ophite theory that Christos and Sophia only descended upon Him at His baptism, and that up to that period He was as other men. It is probable, however, that our copies of these Apocryphal Gospels have been severely edited so as to expunge everything which savoured of Gnostic teaching and may really have been partly or wholly the work of Ophites<sup>3</sup>. Of the *Gospel of Philip*, Epiphanius has preserved a short passage as follows :

“The Lord has revealed to me what the soul ought to say when she goes to heaven, and how she ought to answer each of the Powers on high. ‘I have known myself,’ she says, ‘and I have collected myself from everywhere, and I have not begotten children for the Archon, but I have rooted out his roots, and I have collected the scattered members, and I know thee what thou art. For I, she

<sup>1</sup> Hippolytus, *op. cit.* Bk v. c. 13, pp. 188 *sqq.*, Cruice.

<sup>2</sup> See Giraud, *op. cit.* pp. 250 *sqq.* for references and editions. English translations of some of them have appeared in the “Apocryphal Acts” etc. of Clark’s *Ante-Nicene Library*, and in *Cambridge Texts and Studies*.

<sup>3</sup> This is the opinion of Lipsius. See *Dict. Christian Biog. s.v. Gospels*, Apocryphal.

says, am from above<sup>1</sup>. And thus he [*i.e.* Philip] says, she is set free. But if, he says, she is found to have begotten a son, she is retained below, until she can receive again her own children, and draw them up to herself<sup>2</sup>."

Similar expressions are to be found in two of the documents of the *Pistis Sophia*, and the abstinence from sexual intercourse which they enjoin is direct and first-hand evidence rebutting the accusation of promiscuous immorality which Epiphanius brings against the Ophites or their related sects. Epiphanius attributes to the same sect of "Gnostici" the use of a *Gospel of Perfection* which "others"—the context shows that he means certain Ophites—"are not ashamed to call the Gospel of Eve." Of this he also preserves a single passage as follows :

"I stood upon a high mountain, and I saw a huge man and another who was mutilated [or perhaps only smaller, *κολοβόν*] and I heard a voice of thunder, and I drew near to hearken and he spoke to me and said, 'I am thou and thou art I; and where thou art, there am I, and I am scattered through all things. And whencesoever thou dost wish, collect me, and in collecting me, thou dost collect thyself<sup>3</sup>.'"

Is the greater and lesser man here the Adamas or Father-and-Son of the Ophites, in which case the latter part of the passage doubtless refers to the scattering of the light through the world of matter and the necessity of its collection and return to the Godhead. The "I am thou and thou art I" phrase is repeated in the *Pistis Sophia* by the risen Jesus to His disciples<sup>4</sup>, and seems to refer to the final union of the perfected human soul with the Deity.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. the similar expressions in the speech of the soul on the Orphic Gold Plates, Chapter IV, vol. i. pp. 131 *sqq.*

<sup>2</sup> Epiphanius, *Haer.* xxvi. c. 13, p. 190, Oehler.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* p. 172, Oehler. Cf. the "Logia Jesu" published by the Egypt Exploration Fund in *Oxyrhynchus Papyri*, 1898, p. 3. "Wherever there are two, they are not without God, and wherever there is one alone, I say I am with him. Raise the stone, and there thou shalt find me, cleave the wood and there am I."

<sup>4</sup> *Pistis Sophia*, pp. 206, 230, Copt.



In addition to these books, the Ophites whom Irenaeus and Hippolytus describe quoted freely from the Canonical books of the Old Testament, from one of the apocryphal books of Ezra and from the Book of Tobit, as also from such books of the Canonical New Testament as the Gospels, including that of St John, and most of the Pauline Epistles, including that to the Hebrews<sup>1</sup>. But it would be going too far to say that they "accepted" these or attributed to them a Divine origin, or thought them inspired in the sense in which the word was used by the Catholic Church. On the contrary, Epiphanius complains that they thought many of the contents of the Old Testament Books at any rate were inspired only by Ialdabaoth and the creators of the world of matter for the purpose of misleading mankind<sup>2</sup>; and throughout they seem to have considered all the Canonical Scriptures that they quote as on an equality with the writings of Homer, Hesiod, the legendary Orpheus, and other heathen writers such as Herodotus. Without attempting to deny or question the historical truth of the facts or legends recorded by all these authors, they regarded them merely as figures having an allegorical or typical meaning, which they could interpret in any manner they pleased, so as to make them accord with their own preconceived theories. Thus the Naassenes when they found St Luke quoting from the Proverbs of Solomon that "the just will fall seven times and rise again," declared that this referred to the downward passage of man's soul through the planetary heavens<sup>3</sup>; and Justinus, one of the Ophite teachers, finding a story in Herodotus about Heracles and the serpent-tailed girl whom he met in Scythia, said that it was a type of the generation of the

<sup>1</sup> Grüber, *Die Ophiten*, Würzburg, 1864, pp. 173 *sqq.*, points out that the Ophites, like the Valentinians, seem to have used the Peshitto or Syriac version of the Canonical Books for their quotations. He says the fact had been already noticed by Harvey. It is, of course, another indication of the Anatolian or Syrian origin of the sect.

<sup>2</sup> Irenaeus, I. 28, c. 5, p. 237, Harvey, gives a list of the books which they assigned to each planetary power, Jaldabaoth taking the lion's share with the Hexateuch, Amos and Habbakuk.

<sup>3</sup> Hippolytus, *op. cit.* Bk v. c. 7, p. 150, Cruice. Proverbs xxiv. 16 seems the text referred to.

universe by the combination of the invisible and unforeseeing Demiurge and the female principle or Sophia<sup>1</sup>. The same dialectic had already been made use of by the Orphics, by Philo of Alexandria, and by Simon Magus; but the Ophites seem to have been the first to apply it to all literature. The full effect of this method of interpretation we shall see later.

Generally speaking, it may be said that the Ophites seem to have been the first to bring about any kind of amalgamation between the popular religions of the Near East and the rising faith of Christianity. By interpreting the "mysteries" or secret rites of Asia Minor and elsewhere in their own sense, they supplied Christianity with a mythology which it would otherwise have lacked and the absence of which must always have proved a bar to its propagation among other than Semitic peoples. At the same time they greatly exalted the figure of Christ, who in their system became much less the personal teacher and master of the Jewish-Christian communities<sup>2</sup> than the angel or messenger of the Supreme Being sent from above in pursuance of a vast scheme for the redemption of the human race. In this capacity it went some way towards identifying the historical Jesus with the great god of the Mysteries and towards giving the sacraments of the newly-founded Church the secular authority of the rites practised in them. The influence of the Ophite system or systems upon the sects which succeeded them is at present hard to define, but there can be little doubt that some of the documents, which have come down to us in the Coptic MSS. before mentioned and will be more fully described in Chapter X, can only be explained by reference to them.

<sup>1</sup> Hippolytus, *op. cit.* Bk v. c. 25, pp. 226, 227, Cruice. Sophia is evidently the serpent in this combination.

<sup>2</sup> The Ebionites, or whatever other Judæo-Christian sect is responsible for the *Clementines*, make St Peter affirm that Jesus "did not proclaim Himself to be God," and that "that which is begotten cannot be compared with that which is unbegotten or self-begotten." See *Clem. Hom.* xvi. cc. 15, 16.

## CHAPTER IX

### POST-CHRISTIAN Gnostics : Valentinus

It seems fairly plain that the originators of the Ophite teaching were uneducated men<sup>1</sup>. A few quotations from Homer and Pindar, probably familiar to anyone who listened to the Rhapsodists, are indeed to be found in the anonymous author whom Hippolytus quotes under the name of "the Naassene." But the reading of the learned of that day consisted not of poetry but of philosophy; and there is no trace in his speculations of direct acquaintance with the works of any philosopher whatever. This is the more striking because Heraclitus of Ephesus, Zeno of Cyprus, and Cleanthes of Assos might have been brought into court in support of his cosmogonical ideas; and the Stoic philosophy was especially an Asiatic one, having one of its principal homes in Tarsus, and therefore not very far from Phrygia proper. Its cosmology as taught in Rome at the period now under discussion<sup>2</sup>, differed very little from that of the earlier Ophites, and its theory of "seminal reasons" (λόγοι σπερματικοὶ) or particles of fiery matter descending from heaven to earth and there becoming formative principles, together with its belief in metempsychosis or transmigration has many resemblances with the Ophite

<sup>1</sup> The same may be said of practically all Christians of the Apostolic age. See Hatch, *H.L.* p. 124. It was the reproach which Celsus cast at the whole Christian community in the reign of Marcus Aurelius. See Origen, *cont. Cels.* Bk III. c. 44. Origen, *op. cit.* Bk III. c. 9, retorts that "now" (*i.e. circa* 230 A.D.) not only rich but highly-placed men and well-born ladies are to be found among the Christians. The change probably took place during the reign of Commodus; Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.* Bk V. c. 21. Origen and Eusebius agree that this entry of educated men into the Church brought heresy along with it. See Origen, *op. cit.* Bk III. c. 12.

<sup>2</sup> Bréhier, "La Cosmologie Stoïcienne," *R.H.R.* t. LXIV. (1911), pp. 1-9.

scheme of redemption<sup>1</sup>. Yet the Naassene author in an age when philosophy was most in fashion never appeals to the authority of the founders of the Stoic school or of those followers of theirs who must have been his contemporaries and countrymen; and Hippolytus, whose own acquaintance with Greek philosophy was superficial and hardly first-hand, in his summary of the Naassene doctrine draws no parallel between the two. On the other hand, the Naassene author perpetually refers to the Old Testament which he seems to have known in the Peshitto or Syrian version, although, as will have been seen, he by no means regards it from the Jewish standpoint as a divinely inspired rule of life, and pushes down Yahweh, its God, into a very inferior position in the scale of being. As the date of the Peshitto has not yet been put further back than the second century A.D.<sup>2</sup>, this would lead one to suppose that it had only recently come to the notice of the Naassene writer, who probably welcomed it as a valuable source from which to draw materials for spells and exorcisms. This excessive reverence for the letter as apart from the spirit of a document is characteristic of the magician of the early Christian centuries, and is further exemplified in a magic papyrus of the IIIrd century A.D., now in the British Museum, where "a number of single lines taken without any regard to sense or on any discernible principle from the Iliad and Odyssey" are arranged in a certain order for use as a fortune-telling book, and appear in company with magical recipes for obtaining dreams, compounding love philtres, and all the usual paraphernalia of a wizard of the period<sup>3</sup>. Such a use of writings venerable for their antiquity would never enter into the head of anyone endowed with any literary sense, but seems natural enough to persons of limited reading, to whom they form their sole material for study. In reading into the lives of the Jewish patriarchs hidden allusions to the theories

<sup>1</sup> A. W. Benn, *The Philosophy of Greece*, 1898, pp. 246, 255.

<sup>2</sup> Kenyon, *Handbook to the Textual Criticism of the N. T.*, 1901, p. 138, says, "Mr Gwilliam, whose opinion, as editor of the Peshitto, is entitled to all respect, believes it to be the original translation of the Scriptures into Syriac," but thinks the question not yet decided.

<sup>3</sup> Kenyon, *Greek Papyri*, p. 83.

of the origin of the universe and the destiny of man then current over the whole Hellenistic world, the Naassenes did not behave differently from our own Puritans of Cromwell's time, who discovered in texts like "Take the prophets of Baal, Let not one of them escape<sup>1</sup>!" a justification for "knocking on the head out of hand," the clergy of the opposing party<sup>2</sup>. We may, if we please, picture to ourselves the earlier Ophites as a handful of merchants, artisans, freedmen, and slaves inclined by inherited custom to magical practices and to ecstatic or hysterical forms of religion, and, as it were, intoxicated by the new field of speculation which the translation of the Hebrew Scriptures into their own tongue had opened to them. At the same time, their anti-Semitic feeling, dating perhaps from the time of the Maccabæan resistance which had materially contributed to the downfall of the Syrian Empire, and considerably exacerbated by the atrocities committed by the Jewish rebels at the close of the 1st century A.D., must have forced them into an attitude in every way opposed to Jewish national pretensions; while it is easy to understand that such persons must have caught eagerly at any *via media* which enabled them to reconcile the Jewish traditions, long familiar to them through spells and charms, with the legends of the Greek Mysteries, and at the same time protected them against the social and moral obloquy attaching to open adherence to the Jewish rites. Such considerations, perhaps, explain alike the immediate success of St Paul's preaching in Asia Minor, and the outburst of activity among the Gnostics which followed close upon it<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> 1 Kings xviii. 40.

<sup>2</sup> See the case of Dr Michael Hudson quoted by Sir Walter Scott from Peck's *Desiderata Curiosa* in his notes to *Woodstock*; and Cromwell's letter to the Houses on the siege of Drogheda.

<sup>3</sup> M. Cumont's theory, that the Jewish colonies in Phrygia had introduced the worship among the Pagans of Yahweh under the name of "Hypsistos" is not convincing; but it is probable that in religious matters these colonists gave more than they borrowed. The story of the king of Adiabene who wished to turn Jew (see Chapter XII, *infra*) is significant. Cf. the princes of the same kingdom who fell while fighting valiantly in the Jewish ranks in the Sunday battle of Gabao in which Cestius Gallus was defeated. See Josephus, *Bell.* Bk II. c. 19, § 2.

The Gnostic speculations were, however, destined to pass out of the hands of unlearned men. Although it was hardly likely to have been noticed at the time, the day was past for national or particularist religions having for their object the well-being of one nation or city ; and men's relations to the Divine world were coming to be looked upon as a matter concerning the individual rather than the State. Alexander's work in breaking down the barriers between people and people was beginning to bear fruit in the intellectual as it had already done in the political world, and the thoughtful were everywhere asking themselves, as Tertullian tells us, not only whence man and the world had come, but what was the meaning of the evil within the world<sup>1</sup>. Along with this, too, had come a general softening of manners which was extremely favourable to speculation on such subjects, and to which the vagaries of the Caesars of the Julian house have made us somewhat blind. A reign of terror might often exist among the great families in the capital under a jealous or suspicious Emperor, and the majority of the proletariat might there as in other large towns be entirely given up to the brutal or obscene amusements of the arena or the theatre. But in the provinces these things had little effect on the working of the system set up under the Empire ; and the civilized world was for the first time, perhaps, in its history, beginning to feel the full benefits of good government and freedom from foreign invasion. It is quite true that the population were then, as at the present day, leaving the country and flocking into the towns, thereby acquiring new vices in addition to their old ones ; but this also led, as town life must always do, to increased respect for the rights of their neighbours, and to the extension of the idea of law and order rather than of the right of the strongest as the governing principle of the universe. The Roman law, upon which the jurisprudence of every civilized country is still based, first took coherent shape in the reign of Hadrian ; and Ulpian's fundamental maxim that before the law all men are free and equal was founded on a conception of the rights of the individual very different from the Oriental notion that all subjects high and low were the chattels of the king.

<sup>1</sup> Tertullian, *de Praescript.* c. viii.

In these circumstances, new ethical ideals had arisen which affected all classes in the State. As Sir Samuel Dill has said in his charming sketch of Roman manners under the Julian, Flavian and Antonine emperors, "It has perhaps been too little recognized that in the first and second centuries there was a great propaganda of pagan morality running parallel to the evangelism of the Church<sup>1</sup>." But this ethical propaganda was an entirely lay affair, and the work not of the priests but of the philosophers<sup>2</sup>. It had, indeed, always been so in the Hellenic world, and while we find it exciting no surprise that a priest of the most sacred mysteries should be worse instead of better than other men<sup>3</sup>, it was the philosophers to whom was committed what was later called the care of souls. Thus Alexander had recourse, when prostrated by self-reproach after the killing of Clitus, to the ministrations of Anaxarchus, who endeavoured to console him with the sophism that kings are not to be judged like other men<sup>4</sup>. So, too, we hear of the Stoic philosopher, Musonius Rufus, when the army of Vespasian was besieging Rome, accompanying the Senate's embassy to the troops of Antonius, and preaching to them at the risk of his life upon the blessings of peace and the horrors of war<sup>5</sup>. Seneca, also, when about to die, endeavours to stay his friends' lamentations by reminding them of the "rules of conduct" by which alone they may expect consolation, and bequeaths to them the example of his life<sup>6</sup>; while the "Stoic saint," Thræsea, when the sentence of death reaches him, is occupied in listening to a discourse of Demetrius the Cynic on the nature of the soul and its separation from the body<sup>7</sup>. This shows an attitude of mind very different from the merely magical or, as we should say, superstitious belief in the efficacy of spells and ceremonies; and the example of Epictetus bears witness that it was that of slaves as well as of senators.

Gnosticism, therefore, was bound to become ethical as well as gnostical, or, in other words, to insist on the efficacy of conduct as well as of knowledge, so soon as it came into contact

<sup>1</sup> Dill, *Roman Society from Nero to Marcus Aurelius*, p. 346.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 293, 294.

<sup>3</sup> Like Callias. See Chapter II, vol. I. p. 76, *supra*.

<sup>4</sup> Arrian, *Anabasis*, Bk IV. c. 9.

<sup>5</sup> Tacitus, *Hist.* Bk III. c. 81.

<sup>6</sup> Tacitus, *Annal.* Bk XV. c. 62.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.* Bk XVI. c. 34.

with thinkers trained in philosophy. Where it did so, in the first instance, cannot be told with any degree of certainty; but all probability points to Alexandria as one of the places where the post-Christian Gnosticism first made alliance with philosophic learning. Not only was Alexandria the natural meeting-place of Greeks and Orientals, but it was at the early part of the third century a great deal more the centre of the intellectual world than either Athens or Rome. Although Ptolemy IX Physcon is said to have expelled from it the philosophers and scholars of the Museum, they seem to have returned shortly afterwards, and in the meantime their dispersion in the neighbouring cities and islands, where most of them must have supported themselves by teaching, probably did a good deal towards diffusing the taste for philosophy over a wider area than before. In Philo's time, in particular, the Platonic philosophy had gained such a hold in the city that he, though a leader of the Jews, had had to assimilate it as best he might<sup>1</sup>, and, as we have seen, to bring it more or less into harmony with the traditional beliefs of his own people. A century later we see the same thing occurring with the now rising sect of Christians; and a school of Christian philosophy was founded in Alexandria under the leadership of Pantaenus, the predecessor in office of the famous Clement of Alexandria<sup>2</sup>. If we may judge from the writings of this last, the expressed object of this school was to instil a knowledge of Greek literature and philosophy into Christian teachers, to bring about which it attempted to show that, while both philosophy and Christian theology alike aimed at the discovery of truth, the valuable parts of the philosophic doctrines were borrowed or derived from the writings held sacred by Jews and Christians<sup>3</sup>. Nor were the Alexandrians in the least likely to refuse a hearing to any new faith however wild. The leading place which Alexandria had gained among the markets of the world brought within its gates the adherents of every religion then known, and Jewish merchants and Christian artisans there mixed with Buddhist

<sup>1</sup> Matter, *Hist. du Gnost.* t. i. p. 398.

<sup>2</sup> Eusebius, *Ecol. Hist.* Bk iv. c. 6.

<sup>3</sup> Clem. Alex. *Strom.* Bk i. c. 15.



monks and fetish-worshippers from Central Asia, while the terms on which they met compelled a wide tolerance for one another's opinions, and predisposed its citizens to a practical amalgam of several apparently conflicting creeds<sup>1</sup>.

It was into this atmosphere that Gnosticism entered at least as early as the reign of Hadrian. Who was answerable for its first introduction there we have no means of knowing, nor do we even know with any certainty what form Egyptian Gnosticism first took<sup>2</sup>. One would imagine that the Hellenizing tendency of the Samaritans might have brought to Alexandria the doctrines of Simon Magus, but there is no direct evidence to that effect. The case is different with Antioch, where one Saturninus or Satornilus—the name is spelt differently by Irenaeus and Hippolytus—seems to have put forth, at the period referred to, a *quasi*-Christian system having some likeness to that of the Ophites, its chief distinguishing feature being its hatred of Judaism and its God, for whose overthrow it declared Christ to have been sent<sup>3</sup>. Like the Ophites, Saturninus rigidly opposed the commerce of the sexes, declaring marriage and generation to be alike the work of Satan, the declared enemy of the world-creating angels, and of their leader the God of the Jews<sup>4</sup>. But the followers of this Saturninus seem to have been few in number, and although all the later heresiologists preserved the memory of his teaching, it is probable that the sect itself did not long survive its founder<sup>5</sup>. Basilides, whose name is associated with that of Saturninus by Irenaeus, Hippolytus, and Epiphanius, who all make him a fellow disciple with Saturninus of Menander, the continuator or successor of

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Hadrian's letter to Servian, Chapter II, vol. I. p. 86, *supra*.

<sup>2</sup> Amélineau, *Le Gnosticisme Égyptien*, p. 30. Its early shape was probably more magical and less ethical than its later developments, because, as the same author (*P.S.B.A.* 1888, p. 392) says, for several centuries it was only the lowest classes in Egypt that became Christians.

<sup>3</sup> Irenaeus, Bk I. c. 18, p. 197, Harvey. Hippolytus, *op. cit.* Bk VII. c. 28, p. 369, Cruice.

<sup>4</sup> So Hippolytus, *loc. cit.*, who copies Irenaeus' statement word for word. But something has evidently slipped out of the text. If Christ and Satan were both the enemies of Yahweh, we should have the *συμφώνησις* or fellowship declared impossible by St Paul in 2 Cor. vi. 15.

<sup>5</sup> Matter, *Hist. du Gnost.* t. I. p. 349.

Simon Magus<sup>1</sup>, certainly flourished under the same reign at Alexandria, where he taught an extremely complicated doctrine, declaring that between the unknown Father of All and this world there was interposed a series of 365 heavens corresponding in number to the days of the year, the chief of them being called Abraxas, the letters of which word have that numerical value<sup>2</sup>. This is the account of Irenaeus, not materially varied by any of the other early writers on heresy, with the exception of Hippolytus, who gives us a long account of the doctrine of Basilides and his son Isidore, which according to their own account they derived from Matthias, the Apostle who replaced Judas and who received it secretly from Jesus Himself<sup>3</sup>. From Hippolytus, we learn that Basilides' complete or final teaching declared that there was a time when nothing existed—

“neither matter, nor substance, nor the Unsubstantial, nor simple, nor compound, nor the Intelligible, nor the Unintelligible, nor that which can be comprehended by the senses, nor that which cannot be so comprehended, nor man, nor angel, nor god, nor anything which can be named”—

and that this God-Who-Was-Not willed to make a world<sup>4</sup>. This act of volition, exercised in Hippolytus' words “without will or mind or consciousness<sup>5</sup>,” produced the Seed of the World which contained within itself all the future universe, as the grain of mustard-seed contains the roots, stem, branches, leaves, and

<sup>1</sup> Irenaeus, Bk I. c. 18, p. 197, Harvey; Hippolytus, Bk VII. c. 28, p. 367, Cruice; Epiphanius, *Haer.* XXXIII. c. 1, p. 135, Oehler.

<sup>2</sup> Irenaeus, Bk I. c. 19, § 1, p. 199, Harvey. For the name Abraxas see *ibid.* p. 203, and Hippolytus, *op. cit.* Bk VII. c. 26, p. 361, Cruice. As Harvey points out in his note, the passage containing it has evidently slipped out of Irenaeus' text and has been added at the foot of the roll.

<sup>3</sup> Hippolytus, *op. cit.* Bk VII. c. 20, p. 344, Cruice. The revelations in question must therefore have been made after the Resurrection. Clement of Alexandria says that Basilides was a disciple of Glaucias, the interpreter of Peter: *Strom.* Bk VII. c. 17.

<sup>4</sup> Hippolytus, *op. cit.* Bk VII. c. 21, pp. 345, 346, Cruice.

<sup>5</sup> ἀθελήτως καὶ ἀνοήτως καὶ ἀναισθητός. Hippolytus, *loc. cit.* This στίγμα ἀμέριστον or “indivisible point” from which all things come is mentioned in Simon Magus' Apophasis (see Chapter VI, vol. I. p. 194, *supra*) as well as in the Bruce Papyrus of Chapter X, *infra*.

innumerable other seeds of the future plant<sup>1</sup>. In this Seed was "a Sonhood, threefold in all things, of the same substance with the God-Who-Was-Not and generated from non-existing things<sup>2</sup>." Of this threefold Sonhood, one part was subtle or finely divided like aether or air, one coarser, and one which needed purification; and he goes on to describe how the finer part immediately upon the projection of the Seed, burst forth and flew upwards until it reached the Non-Existent-One, towards whom, Hippolytus says, "every nature strains," on account of "its beauty and majesty<sup>3</sup>." The coarser part of the Sonhood attempted to imitate the first, but failed to do so until helped by the Holy Spirit who served it as the wing does the bird; but although the second Sonhood thereby attained beatitude, the Holy Spirit could not enter into the Godhead along with him "because it (or she) was of a different substance from him and had nothing of his nature<sup>4</sup>." She was therefore left near it, purified and sanctified by her contact with the Sonhood as a jar which has once contained perfume still preserves its savour<sup>5</sup>. As for the third Sonhood, it remained in the Seed of the World, which thereafter gave birth to the Great Archon or Ruler, who is the Demiurge or Architect of the Universe and fashions all cosmic things. This Archon makes out of the things below him a Son who by the arrangement of the God-Who-Was-Not is greater and wiser than himself, whence the Archon causes him to sit at his right hand<sup>6</sup>. This Son is in effect Christ, who reveals to the Archon the existence of the worlds above him, and sends the Gospel (here personified) into the world so that by it the third Sonhood might be purified and thus raised to union with the God-Who-Was-Not.

<sup>1</sup> Or like the Orphic egg from which Phanes came forth. See Chapter IV, vol. I. p. 123, *supra*.

<sup>2</sup> Ἦν, φησίν, ἐν αὐτῷ τῷ σπέρματι Υἱότης, τριμερὴς κατὰ πάντα, τῷ οὐκ ὄντι θεῷ ὁμοούσιος, γεννητὴ ἐξ οὐκ ὄντων, Hippolytus, *op. cit.* Bk VII. c. 22, p. 349, Cruice. If these are Basilides' actual words, he would seem to have been the first author to make use of the expression Homousios.

<sup>3</sup> Hippolytus, *op. et loc. cit.* p. 350, Cruice.

<sup>4</sup> Ἐχει μὲν αὐτὸ μετ' αὐτῆς οὐκ ἠδύνατο· ἦν γὰρ οὐχ ὁμοούσιον· οὐδὲ φύσιν εἶχε μετὰ τῆς Υἱότητος. Hippolytus, *op. et loc. cit.* p. 351, Cruice.

<sup>5</sup> Had Basilides or Hippolytus read Horace?

<sup>6</sup> Hippolytus, *op. cit.* Bk VII. c. 23, p. 353, Cruice.

There is no need to follow further the system of Basilides, nor to describe the extremely complicated tangle of worlds, principalities, powers, and rulers, including the 365 heavens and their Archon or ruler Abraxas, which Basilides interposes between this earth and the Godhead. M. Amélineau has endeavoured to show that, in this, Basilides was borrowing from the ancient Egyptian religion which he imagines to have been still flourishing in the Egypt of the second Christian century<sup>1</sup>. It may be so; and, although M. Amélineau's proofs seem hardly strong enough to bear the weight of the conclusions he would draw from them, it may be conceded that in the Ogdoad and the Hebdomad of which we hear so much in Hippolytus' account of Basilides' teaching, we have a distinct echo of the extraordinary arithmetic of the Pharaonic or old Egyptian theology, wherein we are constantly meeting with an Ennead or "company" of nine gods which, as M. Maspero has shown, sometimes consists of eight, sometimes of ten, and sometimes of a still more discrepant number of individuals<sup>2</sup>. But Basilides' system was never intended for popular use; for he himself said, according to Irenaeus, that only one out of a thousand or two out of ten thousand could understand it, and that his disciples should keep their adherence to it strictly secret, seeking to know all things, but themselves remaining unknown<sup>3</sup>. Its interest for us here lies in the fact that Valentinus who transformed post-

<sup>1</sup> Amélineau, *Le Gnosticisme Égyptien*, pp. 139-152. So Mallet, *Culte de Neith à Sais*, Paris, 1888, pp. 213, 214, says that both Basilides and Valentinus drew their doctrines from the late form of Egyptian religion which he describes.

<sup>2</sup> *Paut neteru*. Maspero, *Études Égyptol.*, II. pp. 244, 245. Cf. the whole of the luminous essay *Sur l'Ennéade* in the same volume and especially pp. 385, 386. Cf. Naville, *Old Egyptian Faith*, p. 117; Erman, *Hist. Egyptian Religion*, p. 78.

<sup>3</sup> *Tu enim, aiunt, omnes cognosce, te autem nemo cognoscat.....Non autem multos scire posse haec, sed unum a mille, et duo a myriadibus*. Irenaeus, Bk I. c. 19, § 3, p. 202, Harvey. Epiphanius, *Haer.* xxiv. c. 5, p. 152, Oehler, while copying Irenaeus' account puts it rather differently, ὅτι πάντας γινώσκειτε, ὑμᾶς δὲ μηδεὶς γινώσκειτω, which probably represents Irenaeus' own expression. One of the authors of the *Pistis Sophia* had evidently heard of Basilides' remark about 1 in 1000. Cf. *Pistis Sophia*, p. 354, Copt.

Christian Gnosticism, as will presently be seen, from an esoteric or mystical explanation of Pagan beliefs<sup>1</sup> into a form of Christianity able to compete seriously with the Catholic Church, was himself a native of Egypt, that he studied the Platonic philosophy in Alexandria<sup>2</sup>, and that he must have resided there at the same time as Basilides, who was slightly older than he, and died before Valentinus' doctrine was promulgated<sup>3</sup>. It is therefore hardly possible that Valentinus should not have known of Basilides' teaching and have borrowed from it, even without the internal evidence of borrowing afforded by a comparison of the two systems<sup>4</sup>. The almost total silence of the Fathers as to Basilides' school after that of Valentinus became famous is to be accounted for, as Matter points out, by supposing that the hearers of Basilides, probably few in number, came over to him in a body<sup>5</sup>.

Basilides, therefore, forms a very important link between Simon Magus and the pre-Christian Gnostics—with whom Basilides was connected, as we have seen, through his master and Simon Magus' successor Menander—on the one hand, and Valentinus on the other. But his teaching also explains to us why so many of the features of the Ophite doctrines also reappear in the Valentinian heresy. For the three Sonhoods of Basilides, although described in a fantastic and almost unintelligible way by Hippolytus, seem to correspond in idea with

<sup>1</sup> So Irenaeus, *loc. cit.*, p. 203, Harvey, makes the Basilidians say that they were neither Jews nor Christians: *Et Judaeos quidem jam non esse dicunt, Christianos autem nondum*—or, as Epiphanius, *loc. cit.*, more strongly puts it: 'Ιουδαίους μὲν ἑαυτοὺς μηκέτι εἶναι φάσκουσι, Χριστιανούς δὲ μηκέτι γεγενῆσθαι.

<sup>2</sup> Epiphanius, *Pan. Haer.* xxxi. c. 2, p. 306, Oehler. Amélineau, *Gnost. Ég.* p. 168, defends Epiphanius' statement.

<sup>3</sup> Matter, *Hist. du Gnost.* t. II. p. 37, says that Basilides died about 135 A.D. and that Valentinus' teaching began to make itself heard about the year following; but he gives no authorities for the statement. Epiphanius, *loc. cit.*, does say, however, that Valentinus was later in time than Basilides and "Satornilus" (Saturninus). There seems no authority for Matter's statement that he was of Jewish origin.

<sup>4</sup> Amélineau, *Gnost. Ég.* p. 176, and Clement of Alexandria as there quoted. Cf. King, *Gnostics*, p. 263.

<sup>5</sup> Matter, *Hist. du Gnost.* t. II. p. 36.

the First and Second Man and the Christos of the Naassene writer; while the Holy Spirit, who is of inferior essence and therefore remains below the Supreme Godhead, can hardly be distinguished from the Sophia or Prunicos who in the Ophite scheme plays so large a part in the work of the redemption of the light. The power of the Great Archon or Ruler of this World is also said in Hippolytus' account of the Basilidean teaching, to rise no higher than the firmament, which was placed between the hypercosmic spaces where soared the Boundary Spirit, and the ordered universe<sup>1</sup>,—a statement which strictly corresponds to the limit placed on the power and authority of the Ophite Ialdabaoth. The Archon of Basilides who must, I think, be intended for Yahweh the God of the Jews is, like Ialdabaoth, ignorant that there is anything above him<sup>2</sup>; and although he differs from his prototype in being better taught by his Son, this is easily explained by the higher position occupied by both Jews and Christians in Alexandria than in Phrygia. It is significant also that the mystic and probably cryptogrammatic name Caulacau which the Naassene writer uses for the Saviour of his system is applied to the corresponding person in the system of Basilides<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Ἐπεὶ οὖν γέγονε πρώτη καὶ δευτέρα ἀναδρομὴ τῆς Υἱότητος, καὶ μεμένηκεν αὐτοῦ τὸ Πνεῦμα τὸ Ἅγιον τὸν εἰρημένον τρόπον, στερεωμάτων ὑπερκοσμίῳ καὶ τοῦ κόσμου μεταξὺ τεταγμένον: Hippolytus, *op. cit.* Bk VII. c. 23, p. 353, Cruice.

<sup>2</sup> Hippolytus, *loc. cit.* p. 354, Cruice.

<sup>3</sup> Hippolytus, *op. cit.* Bk V. c. 8, pp. 158, 159, Cruice, says simply in speaking of the Naassene writer: οὗτοι εἰσὶν οἱ τρεῖς ὑπέρογκοι λόγοι "Καυλακαῦ, Σαυλασαῦ, Ζησάρ." "Καυλακαῦ" τοῦ ἄνω, τοῦ Ἀδάμαντος, "Σαυλασαῦ," τοῦ κάτω θνητοῦ, "Ζησάρ" τοῦ ἐπὶ τὰ ἄνω ῥέυσαντος Ἰορδάνου. "These are the three weighty words: Caulacau [the name] of him who is above, [i.e.] Adamas; Saulasau of the mortal one who is beneath; Zeesar of the Jordan which flows on high." Epiphanius, *Haer.* xxv. c. 4, pp. 162, 164, Oehler, says that they are taken from the words of Isaiah xxviii. 10, שָׁם לְקוֹן לְקוֹן לְקוֹן translated in the A.V. "precept upon precept, line upon line, here a little"; but the resemblance is not very close, and it is more probable that the barbarous words of the text cover some sort of cryptogram. Irenaeus, Bk I. c. 19, § 3, p. 201, Harvey, says of the Basilidians: *Quemadmodum et mundus nomen esse, in quo dicunt descendisse et ascendisse Salvatorem, esse Caulacau*, which Harvey says is unintelligible. See Salmon, *s.h.v.* in *Dict. of Christian Biog.*, where he tries hard to explain

The popularity and success that attended Valentinus' own teaching may be judged from the pains that the Fathers took to oppose it. The five books *Against Heresies* so often quoted above were written by Irenaeus with the avowed intention of refuting Valentinus' disciples. Hippolytus, who aimed at a more encyclopaedic account of the heresies of his time, devotes more space to the Valentinian sect than to any other. Tertullian not only repeatedly gibes at them after his manner when treating of other matters, but composed a special book against them still extant, from which we learn of the existence of other treatises against them written by Justin Martyr, Miltiades a Christian sophist, and one Proculus, all which are now lost<sup>1</sup>. Those near to Valentinus in date seem hardly to have considered him an enemy of Christianity. Clement of Alexandria quotes several passages from the writings of him and his followers, and although it is always with the view of contradicting the statements of his fellow-countryman, he yet does so without any of the heat displayed by other controversialists<sup>2</sup>. On the other hand, the orthodox who wrote long after Valentinus was in his grave are most bitter against him. Epiphanius, who seldom had a good word for any one, calls him, with some justice, the chief of heretics<sup>3</sup>; Philaster of Brescia says he was more a follower of Pythagoras than of Christ, and that he led captive the souls of many<sup>4</sup>; Praedestinatus, that he and his followers throughout the East severely wounded the the name and its use. Cheyne, *Prophecies of Isaiah*, 2nd ed. vol. i. p. 162, would make this Caulacau, however, equivalent to the "word of Jehovah" or Logos. Cf. Renan, *Hist. du Peuple d'Israel*, Eng. ed. 1897, II. pp. 436, 437.

<sup>1</sup> Tertullian, *adv. Valentinianos*, c. 5.

<sup>2</sup> Clem. Alex. *Strom.* Bk II. c. 20; Bk IV. cc. 9, 13; Bk VI. c. 6. So Origen, to whose frequent quotations from the Valentinian Heracleon we owe all that we know of that shrewd Biblical critic. See A. E. Brooke, *Fragments of Heracleon*, Cambridge Texts and Studies, vol. I. p. 4. De Faye's opinion that Clement and Origen were the only Fathers who treated Gnosticism with intelligence and sometimes judicially has been quoted above.

<sup>3</sup> Epiphanius, *Pan. Haer.* XXXI. c. 1, p. 306, Oehler.

<sup>4</sup> Valentinus . . . *Pythagoricus magis quam Christianus, vanam quandam ac perniciosam doctrinam eructans, et velut arithmeticam, id est numerositatis, novam fallaciam praedicans, multorumque animas ignorantium captivavit*, Philastrius, *de Haeresibus liber*, c. 38, p. 43, Oehler, vol. I.

Church of God<sup>1</sup>; while Eusebius in his *Life of Constantine* produces an Imperial edict against the Valentinians and other heretics, issued, according to him, some time before the baptism of its promulgator, and ordering that they shall no longer be allowed to assemble together and that their "houses of prayer" shall be confiscated to the use of the Catholic Church<sup>2</sup>. It was probably in pursuance of some such law, which also enjoined, as Eusebius tells us, the search for and destruction of their writings, that a conventicle of the Valentinians at Callinicum on the Eastern frontier of the Empire was burned by the Christian mob headed by their bishop and monks in A.D. 388<sup>3</sup>. The same scenes were no doubt enacted in other parts of the Empire; and we may, perhaps, see in the fury of the persecutors the measure of their fear.

Yet there is little in the Valentinian doctrine as described by the Fathers to account for the popularity that it evidently attained. Valentinus, like all the Gnostics, believed in one Supreme Source of all things; but he from the first threw over the extremely philosophical idea of Basilides, which some writers would derive from Buddhism<sup>4</sup>, of a non-existent God as the pinnacle of his system. To fill the gap thus left, he returned to the older conception of the Ophites, and postulated a Bythos or Deep as the origin of all. But this "Unknowable Father" was by no means the mere abstraction without direct action upon the world or man that he was in the systems of the Ophites and of Basilides. As to the mode of his action, however, a schism—or rather, a difference of opinion—early manifested itself among his followers. Some of them gave to Bythos a female consort called, as Irenaeus, and, following him, Tertullian, tell us, Silence (*Σιγή*) and Grace (*Χάρις*), from whom all the subsequent aeons or manifestations of the Godhead descended<sup>5</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> [*Valentiniani et Valentinus*] *Hi per orientem dispersi graviter dei ecclesiam vulnerarunt*, *Praedestinatus*, Bk I. c. 11, p. 235, Oehler, vol. I.

<sup>2</sup> Eusebius, *Vita Constantini*, Bk III. cc. 64, 65.

<sup>3</sup> Gibbon, *Decline and Fall*, vol. III. c. 27, p. 174, Bury.

<sup>4</sup> King, *Gnostics*, p. 13.

<sup>5</sup> Irenaeus, Bk I. c. 1, § 1, pp. 8, 9, Harvey; Tertullian, *adv. Val.* c. VII. Is this the "Grace" for whose presence the soul prays in the *apologiae* of the Ophites? See last chapter.



Irenaeus partly explains away this by the statement that Bythos or the Perfect Aeon dwelt for boundless ages in rest and solitude (*ἡσυχία*), but that there existed with him Ennoia or Thought. Whether this last part of the statement was or was not thrown in so as to force a parallel between the system of Valentinus and that of Simon Magus from whom the orthodox insisted all later heresiarchs derived their teaching, cannot now be said. But Hippolytus, who, while not disputing this derivation, is just as anxious to show that Valentinus was also much indebted to the Pythagorean and Platonic philosophy learned by him at Alexandria, tells us that there were other Valentinians who insisted that the Father (or Bythos) was without spouse (*ἄσπυγος*) not feminine (*ἄθελυς*) and lacking nothing (*ἀπροσδεής*); and that Valentinus himself said that Bythos was "unbegotten (*ἀγέννητος*) not subject to conditions of space or time, having no counsellor, nor any substance that could be comprehended by any figure of speech<sup>1</sup>." Herein either Hippolytus or Valentinus seems to have been attracted by the ideas of the Neo-Pythagorean school of Alexandria, who indulged in many arithmetical theories about the Monad or Final Unity which went on producing male and female (i.e. odd and even) numbers alternately until it arrived at the perfect harmony of ten<sup>2</sup>. Yet those who study ancient religions by the comparative method will be more inclined to see in this diversity of opinion among the Valentinians a hesitation between the old idea current, as we have seen, in the Eastern Mediterranean, that a god may be bisexual and therefore capable of producing descendants without female assistance and the ancient Semitic view (due perhaps to the fact that Semitic languages know only two genders) which divided the Godhead like everything else into male and female<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> "Ὁλος, φησί, γεννητὸν οὐδέν, Πατὴρ δὲ ἦν μόνος ἀγέννητος, οὐ τόπον ἔχων, οὐ χρόνον, οὐ σύμβουλον, οὐκ ἄλλην τινα κατ' οὐδένα τῶν τρόπων νοσηθῆναι δυναμένην οὐσίαν : Hippolytus, *op. cit.* Bk VI. c. 29, p. 280, Cruice.

<sup>2</sup> Diogenes Laertius, *Vit. Philosoph.* Bk VIII. c. 19.

<sup>3</sup> Philippe Berger, "Les Stèles Puniques de la Bibliothèque Nationale," *Gazette Archéologique*, 11me ann. Paris, 1876, p. 123, says that the Aryan genius sees atmospheric phenomena where the Semite imagines persons who unite and give birth (personnes qui s'unissent et s'engendrent les unes

However this may be, all the Valentinian schools seem to have agreed upon the emanation which immediately proceeded from the Deep or the Father of All. From Bythos, either alone or with the help of Sige<sup>1</sup>, there proceeded Mind or Nous (Νοῦς), called also Monogenes<sup>2</sup> and the Father, the beginning of all subsequent things. This Nous is said to be "equal and like" to him from whom he had emanated, and by himself capable of comprehending the greatness of Bythos<sup>3</sup>. With Nous there also came forth a female Power named Aletheia or Truth (Ἀλήθεια), and this pair gave birth to a second syzygy, viz. Logos or the Word (Λόγος) and Zoe or Life (Ζωή), who in their turn produced a third pair, namely: Anthropos, Man (Ἀνθρωπος) and Ecclesia, the Church (Ἐκκλησία)<sup>4</sup>. The later Valentinians, from whom Irenaeus quotes, added to these six aeons, Bythos and his spouse Sige, thus making up the originating Ogdoad or eightfold Godhead again called the root and substance of all [subsequent] things<sup>5</sup>. Valentinus himself, however, probably did not give Bythos a spouse and held that he remained apart from and uplifted above his six principal emanations<sup>6</sup>.

les autres). Renan, *Hist. du Peuple d'Israel*, Paris, 1887, t. i. p. 49, shows that all Semites are naturally euhemerists and therefore anthropomorphists.

<sup>1</sup> Amélineau, *Gnost. Ég.* pp. 198 *sqq.*, shows that Sige appears not only in the "Italic School" of Valentinus' followers, but also in the Oriental School which is more likely to represent the teaching of Valentinus himself. This may in fact be deduced from the words which Hippolytus puts into his mouth (*op. cit.* Bk vi. c. 29, p. 281, Cruice): 'Ἀγάπη, φησίν, ἦν ὁλος, ἡ δὲ ἀγάπη οὐκ ἔστιν ἀγάπη, εἰ μὴ ἡ τὸ ἀγαπῶμενον. "He, he says, is all Love, and Love is not Love, unless there is something to love." Thus the Orphics called their Phanes or firstborn god Eros.

<sup>2</sup> As has been many times said, not "Only-begotten," but "unique." See Badham in *Academy*, 5 Sept. 1896.

<sup>3</sup> ταύτην [Sige] δὲ ὑποδεξαμένην τὸ σπέρμα τοῦτο καὶ ἐγκύμονα γενομένην, ἀποκυῆσαι Νοῦν, ὁμοίον τε καὶ ἴσον τῷ προβαλόντι, καὶ μόνον χωροῦντα τὸ μέγεθος τοῦ Πατρὸς: Irenaeus, Bk i. c. 1, § 1, p. 9, Harvey: "and she having received this seed and becoming pregnant, brought forth Nous, like and equal to him who had projected him, and alone containing the greatness of the Father."

<sup>4</sup> *Id.* Bk i. c. 1, § 1, pp. 9, 10, Harvey.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* p. 10, Harvey.

<sup>6</sup> Hippolytus, *op. cit.* Bk vi. c. 29, p. 280, Cruice.

This subdivision of the Divine, resembling as it does the system of Simon Magus before described, may seem at first sight incredibly foolish and complicated, especially when it is considered that these "aeons," as Valentinus calls them, might be considered not only as powers but as worlds. So it did to the Fathers, who are never tired of pouring contempt upon it. Tertullian makes merry over the Valentinian conception of a universe with an endless series of heavens piled one over the other, as he says, like the "Lodgings to let" of a Roman *insula* or tenement house, or, had he ever seen one, of a New York skyscraper<sup>1</sup>. Irenaeus jokes cumbrously, comparing the Valentinian aeons to vegetables as if, he says, a gourd should bring forth a cucumber and this in its turn a melon<sup>2</sup>. Hippolytus, indeed, cannot indulge in such jeers because to do so would have stamped him in the opinion of all the learned of his time as an uneducated barbarian, his pet theory of Gnosticism being that all its doctrine was a plagiarism from the Greek philosophers and notably from Plato. Yet he never loses an opportunity of calling Valentinus' opinions "worthless"; and goes out of his way to tack on to them the system of the Jewish magician Marcus, who, if we can believe the statements of the Fathers, exploited the rising sense of religion of the age for his own immoral or interested purpose<sup>3</sup>.

Yet a statement that Tertullian lets drop, as if accidentally, may teach us to beware of taking Valentinus' supposed opinions on the nature of these hypostases or Persons of the Godhead more literally than he did himself. In his treatise against the Valentinians the "furious African barrister" is led away by the exigencies of his own rhetoric to tell us that there were some among them who looked upon all this elaborate description of the emanations of the Ogdoad as a figure of speech. All the aeons of the Ogdoad were according to them merely attributes or names of God. When, they said, God *thought* of producing offspring, He thereby acquired the name of *Father*; and because his offspring was true, that of *Truth*; and because He wished to appear in human form, he was called *Man*; and because He

<sup>1</sup> Tertullian, *adv. Valentinianos*, c. 7.

<sup>2</sup> Irenaeus, Bk I. c. 5, § 2, p. 106, Harvey.

<sup>3</sup> See p. 128 *infra*.

assembled His attributes in His mind and selected from them those most proper for His purpose, they were called the *Church*; and as His only (or unique) Son was, as it were, uttered or sent forth to mankind, He was called the *Word*; and from His powers of salvation, *Life*; and so on<sup>1</sup>. As we have seen, Valentinus did not invent *de novo* his conception of the Godhead, which bears besides evident marks of having been adopted with slight modification from that of Simon Magus and the Ophites. This statement of Tertullian gives us ground therefore for supposing that he may really have held the same views respecting the Divine Nature as the Catholic Church, merely giving an allegorical explanation of the earlier opinions to convince his hearers that the teaching of the Apostles was not so subversive of or inconsistent with the way of thinking of the ancient theologians and philosophers as some of them thought. Clement of Alexandria shows similar comprehensiveness when he said that in the Christian faith there are some mysteries more excellent than others—or, in other words, degrees in knowledge and grace<sup>2</sup>—, that the Hellenic philosophy fits him who studies it for the reception of the truth<sup>3</sup>, and that the Christian should rejoice in the name of Gnostic, so long as he understands that the true Gnostic is he who imitates God as far as possible<sup>4</sup>. He even goes further, and himself uses the Gnostic method of personification of abstract qualities, as when he says that Reverence is the daughter of Law<sup>5</sup>, and Simplicity, Innocence, Decorum, and Love, the daughters of Faith<sup>6</sup>. If Valentinus used similar metaphors, it by no means follows that he was thereby advocating the worship of many gods, which was the accusation most frequently brought against him by the Catholic Church. The same accusation might with equal propriety be made against John Bunyan on account of his Interpreter and his Mr Greatheart.

But whatever Valentinus' own views with regard to the Supreme Being may have been, he could no more escape than did Philo or any other Platonist from the difficulty of explaining

<sup>1</sup> Tertullian, *adv. Valentinianos*, c. 36.

<sup>2</sup> Clem. Alex. *Strom.* Bk I. c. 1.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* Bk I. cc. 7, 16.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* Bk II. c. 19.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* Bk II. c. 20.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.* Bk II. c. 12.

the connection of this Perfect God with imperfect matter<sup>1</sup>, and this had to be the work in his system of an intermediate Power. This Power was that Nous or Monogenes whom we have seen was the first and unique being produced from the Unknowable Father, to whom he seems to have stood in much the same relation as the Dionysos of the Orphics did to the supreme Zeus<sup>2</sup>. Yet although it was through this lieutenant of the Unknown Father that all things were made, he also was too great to act directly upon matter. Seeing, says Hippolytus in this connection, that their own offspring, Logos and Zoe, had brought forth descendants capable of transmission, Nous and his partner Aletheia returned thanks to the Father of All and offered to him a perfect number in the shape of ten aeons<sup>3</sup>. These ten aeons were projected like the direct emanations of the Godhead in syzygies or pairs, their names being respectively Bythios or Deep (*Βυθιὸς*<sup>4</sup>) and Mixis or Mixture (*Μίξις*), Ageratos or Who Grows not Old (*Ἀγήρατος*) and Henosis or Oneness (*Ἕνωσις*), Autophyes or Self-Produced (*Αὐτοφύης*<sup>5</sup>) and Hedone or Pleasure (*Ἡδονή*), Akinetos or Who Cannot Be Moved (*Ἀκίνητος*) and Syncrasis or Blending (*Σύγκρασις*), Monogenes or the Unique (*Μονογενής*)<sup>6</sup> and Macaria or Bliss (*Μακαρία*). In like manner, Logos and Zoe wishing to give thanks to *their* progenitors Nous and Aletheia, put forth another set, this time an imperfect number, or twelve aeons, also arranged in syzygies and called Paraclete (*Παράκλητος*) and Faith (*Πίστις*), Fatherly (*Πατρικὸς*) and Hope (*Ἐλπίς*), Motherly (*Μητρικὸς*) and Love (*Ἀγάπη*), Ever-Thinking (*Ἀείνους*<sup>7</sup>) and Comprehension (*Σύνεσις*), Of the Church (*Ἐκκλησιαστικὸς*) and Blessedness (*Μακαριότης*), Longed-for (*Θελητὸς*) and Wisdom (*Σοφία*). It was through this last, as through her namesake in the system of the Ophites, that the Divine came to mingle with Matter.

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter VI, vol. I. p. 174, *supra*.

<sup>2</sup> Clem. Alex. *Strom.* Bk VII. c. I.

<sup>3</sup> Hippolytus, *op. cit.* Bk VI. c. 29, p. 281, Cruice.

<sup>4</sup> i.e. Profound.

<sup>5</sup> Not "self-existent," but maker of his own φύσις or nature.

<sup>6</sup> See n. 2, p. 98 *supra*.

<sup>7</sup> Harvey reads here *αἰώνιος* "everlasting," which makes at least as good sense as the other.

Before coming to this, however, it will be well to say something here about the ideas that seem to lie behind the names of this series of aeons numbering, with the first six, twenty-eight in all, which thus made up what was known as the Pleroma or Fulness of the Godhead. If we arrange them in three families or groups according to their parentage, thus :

*Children of Bythos* (either alone or with Sige).

Nous—Aletheia.

*Children of Nous and Aletheia.*

Logos—Zoe.

Bythios—Mixis.

Ageratos—Henosis.

Autophyes—Syncrasis.

Monogenes—Macaria.

*Children of Logos and Zoe.*

Anthropos—Ecclesia.

Paracletos—Pistis.

Patricos—Elpis.

Metricos—Agape.

Ecclesiasticis—Macariotes.

Theletas—Sophia,

it will be seen that among the elder members of each group, that is, the three first syzygies, Nous-Aletheia, Logos-Zoe, and Anthropos-Ecclesia, the name of the male member of each syzygy is always that of an actual and concrete concept—the Mind, the Word, and Man,—showing perhaps how thought and speech all marked different stages in the evolution of the being called the Perfect Man<sup>1</sup>; while the appellatives of the females of each syzygy—Truth, Life, and the Church—all connote

<sup>1</sup> Some memory of this seems to have enlivened the disputes between the Nominalists and Realists of the XIIIth century. Cf. the wrangling of the Doctors at the School of Salerno in Longfellow's *Golden Legend*

I, with the Doctor Seraphic, maintain

That the word that's not spoken, but conceived in the brain,

Is the type of Eternal Generation,

The spoken word is the Incarnation.

abstract ideas<sup>1</sup>. With the Decad put forth by Nous and Aletheia, *i.e.* Bythios-Mixis, Ageratos-Henosis, Autophyes-Hedone, Acinetos-Syncrasis, and Monogenes-Macaria, every male aeon, as M. Amélineau has pointed out, has for name an adjective, while the females are all described by substantives<sup>2</sup>. But the names of the male aeons are all epithets or attributes peculiar to their father Nous, who is thus said to be the abysmal, never-ageing, creator of his own nature, immovable, and unique, and those of the female aeons are descriptive of different states or conditions arising from his action<sup>3</sup>. M. Amélineau thinks that the names of these last describe a successive degradation of the Divine Nature; but this does not seem to have been Valentinus' intention, and it is hard to see for instance why Syncrasis or blending should be more unworthy than Mixis or simple mixture. Moreover, this group of aeons, unlike the six preceding them, are not reproductive and no direct descendants follow from their conjugation. Perhaps then we may best understand Valentinus' nomenclature as a statement that the coming together of Mind and Truth produced Profound Admixture, Never-ageing Union, Self-created Pleasure, Unshakeable Combination, and Unique Bliss. In like manner, the names of the members of the Dodecad or group of twelve aeons proceeding from Logos and Zoe may be read as describing the Comforting Faith, the Fatherly Hope, the Motherly Love<sup>4</sup>, the Everlasting Comprehension, the Elect Blessedness, and the Longed-for Wisdom arising from the conjugation of the Word and Life or, in one word, from the Incarnation<sup>5</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> They are also probably places or receptacles. In the *Pistis Sophia* we read repeatedly of the three *χωρήματα* and of the *τόπος ἀληθείας*.

<sup>2</sup> Amélineau, *Gnost. Egypt.* pp. 200 sqq.

<sup>3</sup> So Hope Moulton, *Early Zoroastrianism*, 1913, p. 114, points out that half of the Persian Amshaspands or archangels bear names expressing "what Mazda is" and the other half "what Mazda gives." There is much likeness, as has been said, between the Amshaspands and the "Roots" of Simon Magus.

<sup>4</sup> It is worth noticing that these are the three "theological" virtues, Faith, Hope, and Charity.

<sup>5</sup> Hippolytus, *op. cit.* Bk VI., c. 23, pp. 269-271, Cruice, wishes to make out that all this is derived from what he calls the "Pythagorean" system of numbers. Anyone wishing to pursue these "silly cabalisms" further is recommended to read Harvey's Introduction to Valentinus' system, *op. cit.* pp. cxv-cxvii.

To return now to the fall of Sophia which, in the system of Valentinus, as in that of the Ophites, brought about the creation of the universe. All the accounts of Valentinus' teaching that have reached us seem to agree that Sophia's lapse was caused, according to him, not by accident as with the Ophites, but by her own ignorance and emulation. Leaving the Dodecad, "this twelfth and youngest of the aeons," as Hippolytus describes her<sup>1</sup>, soared on high to the Height of the Father, and perceived that he, the Unknowable Father, was alone able to bring forth without a partner<sup>2</sup>. Wishing to imitate him, she gave birth by herself and apart from her spouse, "being ignorant that only the Ungenerated Supreme Principle and Root and Height and Depth of the Universes can bring forth alone." "For," says he (*i.e.* Valentinus), "in the ungenerated (or unbegotten) all things exist together. But among generated (or begotten) things, it is the female who projects the substance, while the male gives form to the substance which the female has projected<sup>3</sup>." Hence the substance which Sophia put forth was without form and unshapen—an expression which Valentinus seems to have copied, after his manner, from the "without form and void" (*ἄμορφος καὶ ἀκατασκεύαστος*) of Genesis<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Ἀπὸ δὲ τῶν δεκαδύο ὁ δωδέκατος καὶ νεώτατος πάντων τῶν εἰκοσιεὶς Αἰώνων, θῆλυς ὢν καὶ καλούμενος Σοφία, κατενόησε τὸ πλῆθος καὶ τὴν δύναμιν τῶν γεγενηκότων Αἰώνων, καὶ ἀνέδραμεν εἰς τὸ βάθος τὸ τοῦ Πατρὸς. "But the twelfth of the twelve, and the youngest of all the eight and twenty aeons, who is a female and called Sophia, considered the number and power of those aeons who were begotten (?) and went on high to the height of the Father": Hippolytus, *op. cit.* Bk vi. c. 30, p. 283, Cruice. The "eight and twenty aeons" shows that Valentinus, according to Hippolytus, did not reckon Bythos and Sige in the first Ogdoad.

<sup>2</sup> A further proof that the primitive doctrine of Valentinus did not give a spouse to Bythos.

<sup>3</sup> Ἐν μὲν γὰρ τῷ ἀγενητάῳ, φησὶν, ἔστι πάντα ὁμοῦ. (ὁμοῦ seems here to mean "without distinction of time or place." Cf. the "None is afore or after other" of the Athanasian Creed) ἐν δὲ τοῖς γενητοῖς, τὸ μὲν θῆλυ ἔστιν οὐσίας προβλητικόν, τὸ δὲ ἄρρεν μορφωτικὸν τῆς ὑπὸ τοῦ θήλεως προβαλλομένης οὐσίας. Hippolytus, *op. cit.* Bk vi. c. 30, p. 284, Cruice.

<sup>4</sup> Καὶ τοῦτο ἐστὶ, φησὶν, ὃ λέγει Μωϋσῆς· "ἡ δὲ γῆ ἦν ἀόρατος καὶ ἀκατασκεύαστος." "And this, he says, is the saying of Moses. 'And the earth was invisible and unshapen'"—a curious variant of the A.V., Hippolytus,



This Ectroma or abortion of Sophia, however, caused great alarm to the other members of the Pleroma, who feared that they might themselves be led into similar lapses, and thus bring about the destruction of the whole system. They accordingly importuned Bythos, who ordered that two new aeons, viz. Christos or Christ and the Holy Spirit, should be put forth by Nous and Aletheia to give form and direction to the Ectroma and to alleviate the distress of Sophia<sup>1</sup>. This was accordingly done, and this new pair of aeons separated Sophia from her Ectroma and drew her with them within the Pleroma, which was thereupon closed by the projection by Bythos of yet another aeon named the Cross ( $\Sigma\tauαυρός$ )<sup>2</sup>, whose sole function was apparently to preserve the Pleroma or Divine World from all contamination from the imperfection which was outside<sup>3</sup>. This last aeon being, says Hippolytus, born great, as brought into existence by a great and perfect father, was put forth as a guard and circumvallation for the aeons, and became the boundary of the Pleroma, containing within him all the thirty

*loc. cit.* He goes on to say that this is "the good and heavenly Jerusalem," the land in which the children of Israel are promised milk and honey. It should be noticed, however, that even this unshapen being, like all the Sophias, was identified with the Earth.

<sup>1</sup> Hippolytus, *op. cit.* Bk vi. c. 31, pp. 284, 285. Irenaeus, Bk i. cc. 1, 4, p. 21, Harvey, says that Monogenes [Nous] put forth ( $πρόβαλε$ ) the pair  $κατὰ προμήθειαν τοῦ Πατρὸς$ , apparently without the aid of his partner Aletheia. Hippolytus' account is the simpler, as making all the Pleroma thus descend from a single pair, and is therefore, probably, the earlier.

<sup>2</sup> Hippolytus, *loc. cit.*, says that this new aeon was called "Ὅρος" "Horus," or "The Limit," because he separates the Pleroma or Fulness from the Hysterema or Deficiency (*i.e.* that which lacks God), which is one of those puns which will be familiar to all Egyptologists (see Erman, *Life in Ancient Egypt*, Eng. ed. p. 396, for other examples). He is also said to have been called Metocheus or the Partaker, because he shares in the Deficiency, doubtless as being partly outside the Pleroma. His name of Horus was probably suggested by that of the old Egyptian god whose figure must have been familiar to every Alexandrian. In the IIIrd century A.D., this last generally appears with hawk's head and human body dressed in the cuirass and boots of a Roman gendarme or *stationarius*, which would be appropriate enough for a sentinel or guard.

<sup>3</sup> Hippolytus, *loc. cit.* pp. 284, 285, Cruice.

aeons together. Outside this boundary remained Sophia's Ectroma, whom Christ and the Holy Spirit had fashioned into an aeon as perfect as any within the Pleroma; and she, like her mother, is now called Sophia, being generally distinguished from "the last and youngest of the aeons" as the Sophia Without<sup>1</sup>.

This Sophia Without the Pleroma was by no means at peace within herself. She is represented as having been afflicted with great terror at the departure of Christos and the Holy Spirit from her, when they left her to take their places within the Pleroma, and as grieving over her solitude and "in great perplexity" as to the nature of the Holy Spirit. Hence she turned herself to prayers and supplications to Christos, the being who had given her form, and these prayers were heard. Meanwhile, the thirty aeons within the Pleroma had resolved, on finding themselves safe within the guard of Stauros, to glorify the Father or Bythos by offering to him one aeon who should partake of the nature of each, and was therefore called the "Joint Fruit of the Pleroma"<sup>2</sup>. This was Jesus "the Great High Priest," who, on coming into existence was sent outside the Pleroma at the instance of Christos in order that he might be a spouse to the Sophia Without and deliver her from her afflictions<sup>3</sup>. This he did, but the four passions of

<sup>1</sup> Hippolytus, *loc. cit.* pp. 286, 287, Cruice. Christ and the Holy Spirit, having discharged the duty laid upon them, have retired with Sophia "the youngest of the aeons" within the Pleroma and cannot again issue forth.

<sup>2</sup> Hippolytus, *op. cit.* c. 32: ἔδοξεν αὐτοῖς μὴ μόνον κατὰ συνυγίαν δεδοξάσθαι τὸν υἱόν, δοξάσθαι [δὲ] καὶ διὰ προσφορᾶς καρπῶν πρεπόντων τῷ Πατρί. "It seemed good to them [the aeons of the Pleroma] not only to magnify the Son by conjunction, but also by an offering of pleasing fruits to the Father." So in the mysteries of Isis, Osiris is called the fruit of the vine Dionysos. See Athenagoras, *Legatid.* c. xxii. Plainly Bythos and Nous or Monogenes are here represented as Father and Son as in the Ophite myth. The new projection is necessary to accord with the text about the whole Pleroma dwelling together bodily in Jesus. Cf. Colossians i. 19.

<sup>3</sup> The expression ὁ ἀρχιερεὺς ὁ μέγας is repeated by Clement of Alexandria, *Protrept.* c. xii, possibly with reference to this passage. It may be noticed, however, that Jesus is here also made the Messenger or Ambassador of the Light as with the Ophites. It will be seen later that he occupies the same place with the Manichaeans. Cf. Chapter XIII, *infra*.

Sophia, namely, fear, grief, perplexity, and supplication, having once been created could not be destroyed, but became separate and independent beings. Thus it was that matter came into being, and was itself the creation of the Deity, instead of being, as in the earlier systems, of independent origin. For Jesus "changed her fear into the substance which is psychic or animal (*οὐσία ψυχικὴ*), her grief into that which is hylic or material, and her perplexity into the substance of demons<sup>1</sup>." Of her supplication, however, Jesus made a path of repentance (*ὁδὸν ἐπὶ μετάνοιαν*) and gave it power over the psychic substance. This psychic substance is, says Valentinus, a "consuming fire" like the God of Moses, and the Demiurge or Architect of the Cosmos, and is called the "Place" (*τόπος*) and the Hebdomad or Sevenfold Power, and the Ancient of Days, and is, if Hippolytus has really grasped Valentinus' opinions on the point, the author of death<sup>2</sup>. He and his realm come immediately below that of Sophia Without, here somewhat unexpectedly called the Ogdoad, where Sophia dwells with her spouse Jesus<sup>3</sup>. His sevenfold realm is, it would seem, the seven astronomical heavens, of which perhaps the Paradise of Adam is the fourth<sup>4</sup>. Below this again comes this world, the

<sup>1</sup> Hippolytus, *op. cit.* Bk VI. c. 32, p. 289, Cruice.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 290, Cruice. *Κατὰ τοῦτο τοίνυν τὸ μέρος, θνητὴ τις ἐστὶν ἡ ψυχὴ, μεσότης τις οὐσα· ἔστι γὰρ Ἑβδόμης καὶ Καράπανος.* "According to this, therefore," [he has just said that fire has a twofold power, for there is a fire which devours everything and which cannot be extinguished] "part (of the Demiurge) is a certain soul which is subject to death, and a certain substance which occupies a middle place. For it is a Hebdomad and a laying to rest." The passage is not easy, but seems to mean that some of the souls made by the Demiurge are mortal, while others are susceptible of salvation. Cf. n. 1, p. 109, *infra*. The name Hebdomad evidently refers to the seven astronomical heavens under the rule of the Demiurge, and the title "Ancient of Days" identifies him, like the Jaldabaoth of the Ophites, with the God of the Jews.

<sup>3</sup> Called Ogdoadas or eighth, because it is next above the seven heavens; but Sophia, the 28th, was the last of the aeons. We see, therefore, that Valentinus, like the Ophites of the diagram, is reckoning forwards and backwards in the most confusing way.

<sup>4</sup> So Irenaeus, Bk I. c. 1, § 9, pp. 44, 45, Harvey, says that they [the Valentinians] say that the seven heavens are endowed with intelligence (*νοητούς*) and that they suppose them to be angels, and that the Demiurge

Cosmos, ruled by a hylic or material Power called the Devil (*Διάβολος*) or Cosmocrator, not further described by Valentinus but apparently resembling the Satan of the New Testament<sup>1</sup>. Lowest of all is unformed and unarranged matter, inhabited by the demons, of whom Beelzebub, as in the Gospels, is said to be the chief<sup>2</sup>. We have then four "places" outside the Pleroma or Godhead, arranged in a succession which reckoning from above downwards may be thus summed up:

1. The Heaven of Sophia called the Ogdoad, wherein dwell Sophia Without and her spouse Jesus<sup>3</sup>.

is himself an angel like God. Also that Paradise is a heaven above the third, and that a fourth angel rules (?) there, and that from him Adam took somewhat while talking to him. Whatever this story may mean, it is curious to see how readily the Gnostics identified in name a heavenly place with its ruler, as in the titles of kings and peers.

<sup>1</sup> Irenaeus, Bk I. c. 1, § 10, pp. 47, 48, Harvey, says that the Devil or Cosmocrator and all the spiritual things of evil (*τὰ πνευματικὰ τῆς πονηρίας*) were made out of the pain (*λύπη*) of Sophia, and that he is the creation of the Demiurge, but knows what is above him, because he is a spirit, while his creator is ignorant that there is anything higher than himself, because he is only ruler of animal things (*ψυχικὰ ὑπάρχοντα*). In this, which is probably the teaching of Ptolemy, Valentinus' successor is seen to be reverting to the Ophite ideas. Hippolytus, who here probably gives us Valentinus' own doctrine, says on the other hand (*op. cit.* Bk VI. c. 33, pp. 290, 291, Cruice): "Ὡσπερ οὖν τῆς ψυχικῆς οὐσίας ἡ πρώτη καὶ μέγιστη δύναμις γέγονεν εἰκὼν [the text is here restored by Cruice: *τοῦ μονογενοῦς υἱοῦ, οὕτω τῆς ὑλικῆς οὐσίας δύναμις*] διάβολος, ὁ ἄρχων τοῦ κόσμου τούτου· τῆς δὲ τῶν δαιμόνων οὐσίας, ἥτις ἐστὶν ἐκ τῆς ἀπορίας, ὁ Βεελζεβούδ. "As therefore the first and greatest power of the animal substance (the Demiurge) came into being as the image of the unique son (Nous), so the power of the material substance is the Devil, the Ruler of this world; and Beelzebud [the power] of the substance of demons which came into being from the perplexity" (of Sophia). It has been shown elsewhere (*P.S.B.A.* 1901, pp. 48, 49) that this Beelzebud or Beelzebuth is written in the Magic Papyri Jabezebuth or Yahweh Sabaoth, probably in pursuance of the parallelism which gives every god or superior power his correspondent personality in the inferior or evil world. In all magic, mediaeval or otherwise, Beelzebuth is carefully distinguished from Satan.

<sup>2</sup> Matthew x. 25, xii. 24, 27; Mark iii. 22; Luke xi. 15, have *βεελζεβούλ*, while the Peshitto writes the more familiar Beelzebub. See *P.S.B.A.* quoted in last note.

<sup>3</sup> Called also the Heavenly Jerusalem. Hippolytus, *op. cit.* Bk VI. c. 32, p. 290, Cruice.

2. The Sevenfold World called the Hebdomad created and ruled by the Demiurge or Ancient of Days.

3. Our own ordered world or Cosmos created by the Demiurge but ruled by the Devil.

4. Chaos or unarranged Matter ruled by Beelzebub, Prince of the Demons.

Much of this may be due to the desire apparently inborn in natives of Egypt to define with excessive minuteness the topography of the invisible world; but the disposition of these different Rulers was by no means a matter of indifference to mankind. The Demiurge, as in the Ophite system, was not, indeed, bad, but foolish and blind, not knowing what he did, nor why he created man. Yet it is he who sends forth the souls of men which reach them at their birth and leave them at their death. Hence, says Hippolytus, he is called Psyche or Soul as Sophia is called Pneuma or Spirit. But this soul of man is little else than what we call the life, and here as in all else the Demiurge is controlled without knowing it by his mother Sophia, who from her place in the Heavenly Jerusalem directs his operations. The bodies of men the Demiurge makes from that hylic and diabolic substance which is matter<sup>1</sup>, and the soul which comes

<sup>1</sup> Irenaeus, Bk I. c. 1, § 10, p. 49, Harvey: Δημιουργήσαντα δὴ τὸν κόσμον, πεποιθέναι καὶ τὸν ἄνθρωπον τὸν χοϊκόν· οὐκ ἀπὸ ταύτης δὲ τῆς ξηρᾶς γῆς, ἀλλ' ἀπὸ τῆς ἀοράτου οὐσίας, ἀπὸ τοῦ κεχυμένου καὶ ῥευστοῦ τῆς ὕλης λαβόντα· καὶ εἰς τοῦτον ἐμφυσῆσαι τὸν ψυχικὸν διορίζονται. "Having indeed fashioned the world, he (the Demiurge) made material man; not taking him out of this dry earth, but from the unseen substance, from the poured forth and liquid matter, and into him, they declare, he breathed that which is of the soul." Although this might be taken for a Ptolemaic elaboration or embroidery of Valentinus' own doctrine, it is repeated in almost identical words in the *Excerpta Theodoti* of Clement of Alexandria, which represent the teaching of the Oriental School, and it is therefore possibly the statement of Valentinus himself. Hippolytus, *op. cit.* Bk VI. c. 34, p. 293, Cruice, is quite in accord with this. Irenaeus says later (Bk I. c. 1, § 11) with reference to the body of Jesus: καὶ ὑλικὸν δὲ οὐδ' ὅτι οὐκ εἰληφέναι λέγουσιν αὐτόν· μὴ γὰρ εἶναι τὴν ὕλην δεκτικὴν σωτηρίας. "And they say that He took on Himself nothing whatever of matter; for matter is not susceptible of salvation." From which it is to be inferred that Valentinus rejected the resurrection of the body.

from him dwells within it as in an inn, into which all may enter. Sometimes, says Valentinus—and in this instance at least we know it is he, not one of his followers, who is speaking—the soul dwells alone and sometimes with demons, but sometimes with Logoi or “words,” who are heavenly angels sent by Sophia Without and her spouse the Joint Fruit of the Pleroma into this world, and who dwell with the soul in the earthly body, when it has no demons living with it<sup>1</sup>. After leaving the body of matter, the soul will even be united with its especial angel in a still more perfect manner, as is a bridegroom with his bride<sup>2</sup>, a

<sup>1</sup> Irenaeus, Bk i. c. 1, § 4, p. 23, Harvey, says that when Jesus, the Joint Fruit of the Pleroma, was projected, Angels of the same kind as himself (*ὁμογενεῖς*) were projected with him as a guard of honour. That these are the spiritual spouses of the souls of men is confirmed by Hippolytus, *op. cit.* Bk vi. c. 34, p. 292, according to Cruice’s emendation: Ὑποδιήρηται δὲ καὶ τὰ ἐν τῇ Ὀγδοάδι, καὶ προβεβήκασιν ἡ Σοφία, ἥτις ἐστὶ μήτηρ πάντων τῶν ζώντων κατ’ αὐτούς, καὶ ὁ κουνὸς τοῦ Πληρώματος καρπὸς ὁ Λόγος, [καὶ] οὔτινες εἰσὶν ἄγγελοι ἐπουράνιοι, πολιτευόμενοι ἐν Ἱερουσαλὴμ τῇ ἄνω, τῇ ἐν οὐρανοῖς. “The things which are in the Ogdoad also are subdivided, and there proceed (from it) Sophia who is, according to them, the Mother of All Living, and the Joint Fruit of the Pleroma, the Logos, and there are certain heavenly angels who are citizens of the Jerusalem which is above, that which is in the heavens.” So later (*ibid.* p. 293, Cruice)... οὔτινές εἰσι λόγοι ἄνωθεν κατεσπαρμένοι ἀπὸ τοῦ κοινοῦ τοῦ Πληρώματος καρποῦ καὶ τῆς Σοφίας εἰς τοῦτον τὸν κόσμον, κατοικοῦντες ἐν [σώμα]τι χοῖκῳ μετὰ ψυχῆς, ὅταν δαίμονες μὴ συνοικῶσι τῇ ψύχῃ. “There are certain Logoi sown from above in the world by the Joint Fruit of the Pleroma and Sophia, which dwell in the material body with the soul, when there are no demons dwelling with it.” Clement of Alexandria, in *Strom.* Bk v. c. 14, points out that the notion of demons dwelling with the soul is to be found in Plato, and quotes the passage from the Vision of Er (*Rep.* Bk x. c. 15) about the souls of men between births each receiving from the hand of Lachesis a demon as their guides through life. It is more likely, however, to have been derived from the Zoroastrian belief in the Fravashis or Ferouers, celestial spirits who live with Ahura Mazda and the powers of light, until they are sent on earth to be joined with the souls of men, and to combat the powers of Ahriman (see L. C. Casartelli, *La Philosophie Religieuse du Mazdéisme*, Paris, 1884, pp. 76–80, for references). Cf. Hope Moulton, *op. cit.* c. viii. *passim*.

<sup>2</sup> Irenaeus, Bk i. c. 1, § 12, p. 59, Harvey: Τοὺς δὲ πνευματικοὺς ἀποδυσσασμένους τὰς ψυχὰς καὶ πνεύματα νοερὰ γενομένους, ἀκρατήτως καὶ ἀοράτως ἐντὸς πληρώματος εἰσελθόντας νύμφας ἀποδοθῆσθαι τοῖς περὶ τὸν Σωτῆρα

state which is sometimes spoken of as "the Banquet," and seems connected with what has been said above about the meeting of Jesus the Joint Fruit with the Sophia Without<sup>1</sup>. Yet this is not a question of conduct or free will, but of predestination, and seems to mark the chief practical difference between Valentinus on the one hand and the Ophites and the pre-Christian Gnostics on the other. The Ophites, as we have seen, believed in the threefold nature of the soul, or its composition from the pneumatic or spiritual, the psychical or animal, and the choic or earthly, all which elements were thought to be present in everyone. But they held, following their predecessors the Orphici, that these divisions corresponded to what may be called degrees of grace, and that it was possible for man to pass from one category to the other, and become wholly pneumatic or psychic or earthly. Valentinus, however, introduces a different idea and makes the distinction between the three

ἀγγέλους. "And the Spirituals, or Pneumatis, doffing their souls and becoming intelligent spirits, shall enter unperceived and unseen within the Pleroma, and shall be given as brides to the angels about the Saviour." This suggestion, which completely shocked the modesty of Tertullian, may be connected with the Zoroastrian idea of the virgin who appears to the believer as his conductor at the bridge Chinvat. See Chapter XII, *infra*.

<sup>1</sup> This appears in the *Excerpta Theodoti*, fr. 63, Migne's *Patrol. Graeci*, t. ix. col. 689: 'Ἡ μὲν οὖν πνευματικῶν ἀνάπαυσις ἐν Κυριακῇ ἐν Ὁγδοάδι ἢ Κυριακῇ ὀνομάζεται· παρὰ τῇ μητρὶ ἔχοντα τὰς ψυχὰς τὰ ἐνδύματα ἄχρι συντελείας· αἱ δὲ ἄλλαι πισταὶ ψυχαὶ παρὰ τῷ Δημιουργῷ· περὶ δὲ τὴν συντέλειαν ἀναχώρουσι καὶ αὐτοὶ εἰς Ὁγδοάδας. Εἴτα τὸ δείπνον τὸν γάμον κοινὸν πάντων τῶν σωζομένων, ἄχρις ἂν ἀπισωθῇ πάντα καὶ ἄλληλα γνωρίσῃ. "Therefore the repose of the Spirituals in [the dwelling] of the Lord, that is, in the Ogdoad, is called the Lord's rest" (cf. Irenaeus, Bk i. cc. 1, 9, p. 46, Harvey): "the garments [i.e. natures] containing the souls [will remain] with the Mother until the Consummation. And the other faithful souls (will remain) with the Demiurge; and at the Consummation they will withdraw, and they also will go into the Ogdoad. Then will be the Wedding Feast of all those who are saved until all things shall be made equal and all things mutually made known." This heavenly banquet, of which we may be quite sure Valentinus made the Marriage in Cana a type, will be met with again in the worship of Mithras (Chapter XII, *infra*). But it was also well known to the Orphics (see Abel's *Orphica*, Frag. 227, etc.), and the question repeats itself: Did the Orphics borrow the idea from the Persians, or the Mithraists from the Orphics?

different categories of human souls one not of degree, but of essence<sup>1</sup>. Men have not a threefold soul, but belong to one of three classes, according to the source of their souls. Either they are pneumatic, *i.e.* spiritual, belonging wholly to Sophia, or psychic, that is animated by the Demiurge alone and therefore like him foolish and ignorant although capable of improvement, or hylic, that is formed wholly of matter and therefore subject to the power of the demons<sup>2</sup>. Nothing is said explicitly by Hippolytus as to how this division into classes is made; but we know by other quotations from Valentinus himself that this is the work of Sophia who sends the Logoi or Words into such souls as she chooses, or rather into those which she has created specially and without the knowledge of the Demiurge<sup>3</sup>.

The consequences of this division upon the future of mankind generally also differed materially from that of the Ophitic scheme. Only the pneumatics or spiritual men are by nature

<sup>1</sup> Valentinus may have found this doctrine in Egypt, where as Maspero points out (*Ét. Égyptol.* i. p. 398) only the rich and noble were thought to enjoy the life beyond the grave.

<sup>2</sup> Valentinus' remark about the Cosmocrator being superior in knowledge to the Demiurge because he is a *spirit* (see n. 1, p. 108 *supra*) much complicates the problem, and brings us pretty near to the Dualism of the Avesta. That all matter was in Valentinus' opinion transitory appears from Irenaeus, Bk i. c. 1, § 13, where it is said that when all the seed scattered by Sophia in the world, *i.e.* the souls of the Pneumatici, is gathered in, the fire which is within the Cosmos shall blaze forth and after destroying all matter shall be extinguished with it.

<sup>3</sup> Clem. Alex., *Strom.* Bk ii. c. 8, quotes an epistle of Valentinus in which he speaks of the terror of the angels at the sight of man because of the things which he spoke: διὰ τὸν ἀοράτως ἐν αὐτῷ σπέρμα δεδωκότα τῆς ἄνωθεν οὐσίας, καὶ παρρησιαζόμενον "because of that within him which yielded a germ of the substance on high, and spoke freely." So Irenaeus, Bk i. c. 1, § 10, p. 51, Harvey: "Ἐλαθεν οὖν, ὡς φασί, τὸν Δημιουργὸν ὁ συγκατασπαρεῖς τῷ ἐμφυσήματι αὐτοῦ ὑπὸ τῆς Σοφίας πνευματικὸς ἀνθρώπων [ἄνθρωπος] ἀρρήτῳ [adj. δυνάμει καὶ] προνοίᾳ. "It escaped the Demiurge, therefore, as they say, that the man whom he had formed by his breath was at the same time made spiritual by Sophia with unspeakable power and foresight." So that, as Irenaeus says a few lines later, man has his soul from the Demiurge, his body from Chaos, his fleshly part (τὸ σαρκικόν) from matter, and his spiritual man from the Mother, Achamoth [*i.e.* חכמה "Wisdom"].



immortal or deathless, and when they leave the material body go on high to the Ogdoad or Heaven of Sophia, where she sits with Jesus the "Joint Fruit" of the Pleroma<sup>1</sup>. The hylics or men who are wholly material perish utterly at death, because their souls like their bodies are corruptible<sup>2</sup>. There remain the psychic—the "natural men" of the New Testament<sup>3</sup>—who are not so to speak "saved"; but are yet capable of salvation. How was this salvation to be brought about?

Valentinus seems to have answered this by saying, as any Catholic Christian would have done at the time, that it was through the Divine Mission of Jesus. Yet this Jesus, according to Valentinus or the Valentinian author from whom Hippolytus draws his account, was neither Jesus the Joint Fruit of the Pleroma, who according to them remained with his spouse

<sup>1</sup> Clem. Alex. *Strom.* Bk iv. c. 13, quoting "a certain homily" (τις ὁμιλία) of Valentinus: 'Απ' ἀρχῆς ἀθανατοὶ ἐστέ, καὶ τέκνα ζωῆς ἐστε αἰωνίας καὶ τὸν θάνατον ἠθέλετε μερίσασθαι εἰς ἑαυτοὺς, ἵνα δαπανήσῃτε αὐτὸν καὶ ἀναλώσῃτε καὶ ἀποθάνῃ ὁ θάνατος ἐν ὑμῖν καὶ δι' ὑμῶν. "Ὅταν γὰρ τὸν μὲν κόσμον λύτῃτε, ὑμεῖς δὲ καταλύσῃτε, κυριεύετε τῆς κτίσεως καὶ τῆς φθορᾶς ἀπάσης. "You were deathless from the beginning and the children of life everlasting, and you wish to share out death among you, in order that you may dissipate and destroy it and that death may die in and by you; for when you put an end to the world and are yourselves put an end to, you have rule over creation and all corruption." So one of the documents of the *Pistis Sophia* speaks of this world being finally consumed by the fire "which the perfect wield." It was doubtless such predictions which gave colour to the charge of incendiarism made by the Roman authorities against the Christians generally. For the translation of the pneumatics to the Ogdoad see next note.

<sup>2</sup> Hippolytus, *op. cit.* Bk vi. c. 31, p. 290, Cruice: 'Εὰν ἐξομοιωθῇ τοῖς ἄνω ἐν Ὀγδοάδι, ἀθάνατος ἐγένετο καὶ ἦλθεν εἰς τὴν Ὀγδοάδα ἥτις ἐστὶ φησὶν, Ἱερουσαλὴμ ἐπουράνιος· ἐὰν δὲ ἐξομοιωθῇ τῇ ὕλῃ, τουτέστι τοῖς πάθεσι τοῖς ἱλικοῖς, φθαρτή ἐστὶ καὶ ἀπώλετο. "If [the soul] be of the likeness of those on high in the Ogdoad, it is born deathless and goes to the Ogdoad which is, he says, the heavenly Jerusalem; but if it be of the likeness of matter, that is, if it belongs to the material passions, it is corruptible and is utterly destroyed."

<sup>3</sup> ψυχικός ἄνθρωπος translated in the A.V. by "natural man" evidently means in the Valentinian sense those who are *animated* or have had breathed into them the *breath* of life merely. It has nothing to do with soul as we understand the term.

Sophia in the Heavenly Jerusalem, nor Christos who with his consort the Holy Spirit was safe within the Pleroma. He was in effect a third saviour brought into being especially for the salvation of all that is worth saving in this devil-ruled and material world, in the same way that Christos and his consort had saved the first Sophia after she had given birth to the monstrous Ectroma, and as Jesus the Joint Fruit had saved this Ectroma itself. It is very probable, as M. Amélineau has shown with great attention to detail, that every system, perhaps every universe, had according to Valentinus its own saviour, the whole arrangement being part of one vast scheme for the ordering and purifying of all things<sup>1</sup>. Hence Valentinus explains, as the Ophites had failed to do, that salvation spreads from above downwards and that the redemption of this world was not undertaken until that of the universe of the Demiurge had been effected<sup>2</sup>. The Demiurge—and the statement has peculiar significance if we consider him the God of the Jews—had been taught by Sophia Without that he was not the sole God, as he had imagined, and had been instructed and “initiated into the great mystery of the Father and the Aeons<sup>3</sup>.” Although

<sup>1</sup> Amélineau, *Gnost. Ég.* p. 225.

<sup>2</sup> Hippolytus, *op. cit.* Bk vi. c. 36, pp. 297, 298, Cruice: “Ἐδει οὖν διορθωμένων τῶν ἄνω κατὰ τὴν αὐτὴν ἀκολουθίαν καὶ τὰ ἐνθάδε τυχεῖν διορθώσεως. “Wherefore when things on high had been put straight, it had to be according to the law of sequences that those here below should be put straight also.”

<sup>3</sup> Hippolytus, *op. cit.* p. 297, Cruice: ἐδιδάχθη γὰρ ὑπὸ τῆς Σοφίας ὁ Δημιουργός, ὅτι οὐκ ἔστιν αὐτὸς Θεὸς μόνος ὡς ἐνόμιζε, καὶ πλὴν αὐτοῦ ἕτερος (οὐκ) ἔστιν· ἀλλ’ ἐγὼν διδασκόμενος ὑπὸ τῆς Σοφίας τὸν κρείττονα· κατηχήθη γὰρ ὑπ’ αὐτῆς, καὶ ἐμύθη καὶ ἐδιδάχθη τὸ μέγα τοῦ Πατρὸς καὶ τῶν Αἰώνων μυστήριον, καὶ ἐξείπεν αὐτὸ οὐδενί, κ.τ.λ. “For the Demiurge had been taught by Sophia that he was not the only God and that beside him there was none other, as he had thought; but through Sophia’s teaching he knew better. For he had been instructed and initiated by Sophia, and had been taught the great mystery of the Father and of the Aeons, and had declared it to none”—in support of which the statement in Exodus (vi. 2, 3) about being the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, but “by my name Jehovah was I not known unto them” is quoted. The identification by Valentinus of the Demiurge with the God of the Jews is therefore complete.

it is nowhere distinctly stated, it seems a natural inference that the same lot will fall to the psychic men who are, like the Demiurge, "soul" rather than "spirit," and that they will receive further instruction in the Heaven of Sophia. Thus, he continues, the lapses<sup>1</sup> of the Demiurge had been set straight and it was necessary that those here below should go through the same process. Jesus was accordingly born of the Virgin Mary; He was entirely pneumatic, that is His body was endowed with a spiritual soul, for Sophia Without herself descended into Mary and the germ thus sown by her was formed into a visible shape by the operation of the Demiurge<sup>2</sup>. As for His Mission, it seems to have consisted in revealing to man the constitution of the worlds above him, the course to be pursued by him to attain immortality, and to sum up the whole matter in one word, the *Gnosis* or knowledge that was necessary to salvation<sup>3</sup>.

Here the account of the teaching of Valentinus, which has been taken almost entirely from the *Philosophumena* or from quotations from his own words in trustworthy writers like

<sup>1</sup> σφάλματα "stumlings," Hippolytus, *loc. cit.*

<sup>2</sup> Hippolytus, *op. cit.* Bk vi. c. 35, p. 295, Cruice. I have taken what seems on comparison to be the original form of Valentinus' teaching. In the same chapter, Hippolytus tells us that his followers were divided on the question of the composition of the body of Jesus—the Italic School led by Heracleon and Ptolemy averring that it was psychic and that at His baptism only the πνεῦμα came upon Him as a dove, while the Oriental School of Axionicus and Bardesanes maintained that it was pneumatic from the first. Cf. n. 2, p. 116 *infra*.

<sup>3</sup> Amélineau, *Gnost. Ég.* p. 226. The *Excerpta Theodoti*, on which he relies, says (fr. 78): Μέχρι τοῦ βαπτίσματος οὐδ' ἡ εἰμαρμένη, φασίν, ἀληθὲς· μετὰ δὲ τοῦτο οὐκ ἔτι ἀληθεύουσιν οἱ ἀστρολόγοι. Ἔστι δὲ οὐ τὸ λουτρὸν μόνον τὸ ἐλευθεροῦν, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἡ γνῶσις τίνες ἡμεν, τί γεγόναμεν, ποῦ ἡμεν, ἢ ποῦ ἐνεβλήθημεν, ποῦ σπεύδομεν, πόθεν λυτρούμεθα, τί γέννησις τί ἀναγέννησις. "Until baptism then, they say the destiny [he is talking of that which is foretold by the stars] holds good; but thereafter the astrologers' predictions are no longer unerring. For the [baptismal] font not only sets us free, but is also the *Gnosis* which teaches us what we are, why we have come into being, where we are, or whither we have been cast up, whither we are hastening, from what we have been redeemed, why there is birth, and why re-birth." For baptism was to the Valentinian initiation, and a mystagogue of Eleusis would have expressed himself no differently.

Clement of Alexandria, abruptly ends, and we are left to conjecture. We cannot therefore say directly what Valentinus himself taught about the Crucifixion. Jesus, the historical Jesus born of the Virgin Mary, though purely pneumatic or spiritual at the outset, received according to one account some tincture of the nature of all the worlds through which He had descended, and must therefore, probably, have had to abandon successive parts of His nature, as He reascended<sup>1</sup>. Probably, therefore, Valentinus thought that the Spiritual or Divine part of Him left Him before the Passion, and that it was only His material body that suffered<sup>2</sup>. As we shall see later, this idea was much elaborated by the later Gnostics, who thought that all those redeemed from this world would in that respect have to imitate their Great Exemplar. If this be so, it is plain that it was only that part of the soul of Jesus which He had received from Sophia which returned to her, and was doubtless re-absorbed in her being. Yet there is nothing to make us believe that Valentinus did not accept the narrative of the Canonical

<sup>1</sup> Irenaeus, Bk I. c. 1, § 13, pp. 60-62, Harvey; Amélineau, *Gnost. Ég.* p. 226, and *Excerpta Theodoti* there quoted.

<sup>2</sup> Hippolytus, *op. cit.* Bk VI. c. 35, pp. 295, 296, Cruice: 'Ο δὲ Ἰησοῦς, ὁ καινὸς ἄνθρωπος, ἀπὸ Πνεύματος Ἁγίου [καὶ τοῦ Ὑψίστου], τουτέστι τῆς Σοφίας καὶ τοῦ Δημιουργοῦ, ἵνα τὴν μὲν πλάσιν καὶ κατασκευὴν τοῦ σώματος αὐτοῦ ὁ Δημιουργὸς καταρτίσῃ, τὴν δὲ οὐσίαν αὐτοῦ τὸ Πνεῦμα παράσχω τὸ Ἅγιον, καὶ γένηται Λόγος ἐπουράνιος ἀπὸ τῆς Ὀυδοάδος γεννηθεὶς διὰ Μαρίας. "But Jesus, the new man, [has come into being] by the Holy Spirit and by the Highest, that is by Sophia and the Demiurge, so that the Demiurge might put together the mould and constitution of His body and that the Holy Spirit might provide its substance; and that He might become the Heavenly Logos . . . when born of Mary." According to this, the body of Jesus was a "psychic" or animal one; yet Hippolytus says immediately afterwards (p. 296, Cruice), that it was on this that there was a division between the Italic and the Oriental Schools of Valentinians, the former with Heracleon and Ptolemy saying that the body of Jesus was an animal one, the Holy Spirit coming on Him as a dove at His baptism, while the Orientals with Axionicus and Bardesanes maintained that the body of the Saviour was pneumatic or spiritual, "the Holy Spirit or Sophia and the power of the Highest or Demiurgic art having come upon Mary, in order that what was given to Mary might be put into form." Apparently Valentinus was willing to call the God of the Jews Ὑψίστος or "Highest," which M. Cumont thinks was his name in Asia Minor.

Gospels in full<sup>1</sup>, or to doubt that he taught that Jesus really suffered on the Cross, although he doubtless interpreted this in his usual fashion, by making it a symbol of the self-sacrifice of Jesus the Joint Fruit of the Pleroma, when He left that celestial abode to give form and salvation to the miserable Ectroma of Sophia<sup>2</sup>. Here again we can but gather Valentinus' opinions from those of his followers, who may have altered them materially to fit them to the exigencies of a situation of which we can form no very precise idea.

Of these followers we know rather more than in the case of any other of the early heresiarchs. According to Tertullian, Valentinus was brought up as a Christian, and expected to become a bishop of the Catholic Church, "because he was an able man both in genius and eloquence<sup>3</sup>." Finding, Tertullian goes on to say, that a confessor<sup>4</sup> was preferred to him, he broke with the Church and "finding the track of a certain old opinion" (doubtless, the Ophite) "marked out a path for himself." The same accusation of disappointed ambition was levelled against nearly every other heresiarch at the time, and may serve to show how greatly the place of bishop was coveted; but we have

<sup>1</sup> With the exception of that of St John, since the part of the *Pistis Sophia* which it is suggested is by Valentinus does not quote it. His followers, however, knew of it, as in the *Excerpta Theodoti* the opening verse τὸ ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ Λόγος καὶ ὁ Λόγος ἦν παρὰ τὸν Θεόν, καὶ Θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος is quoted with the comments of οἱ ἀπὸ τοῦ Οὐαλεντίνου on it. Cf. Amélineau, *Gnost. Ét.* p. 209, where the passage is given in n. 4.

<sup>2</sup> Irenaeus, Bk I. c. I, § 13, pp. 60-62, Harvey: Εἰσὶ δὲ οἱ λέγοντες... "Ἐπαθε δὲ λοιπὸν κατ' αὐτοὺς ὁ ψυχικὸς Χριστός, καὶ ὁ ἐκ τῆς οἰκονομίας κατεσκευασμένος μυστηριωδῶς, ὧν ἐπιδείξῃ [δὲ] αὐτοῦ ἡ μήτηρ τοῦ ἄνω Χριστοῦ, ἐκείνου τοῦ ἐπεκταθέντος τῷ Σταυρῷ, καὶ μορφώσματος τὴν Ἀχάμωθ μόρφωσιν τὴν κατ' οὐσίαν· πάντα γὰρ ταῦτα τύπους ἐκείνων εἶναι λέγουσι. "And there are some" (probably the Anatolic or Oriental School is meant) "who say... And further the animal Christ, He who had been mysteriously formed by dispensation, suffered so that the Mother might show forth through Him the type of the Christ on high, of him who is extended by Stauros, and gave shape to Achamoth as regards substance: for they say that all things here are the types of others there."

<sup>3</sup> Tertullian, *adv. Valentinianos*, c. IV.

<sup>4</sup> That is, not a martyr, but one who had suffered for the faith without losing his life.

no means of judging its truth in this particular instance, and it is repeated neither by Irenaeus, Hippolytus, nor Clement of Alexandria who was in an exceptionally good position for knowing the truth of the case. Irenaeus, however, says that Valentinus came to Rome during the papacy of Hyginus, flourished (ἤκμασσε) under that of Pius, and dwelt there until that of Anicetus; and this is confirmed by Eusebius, who connects Valentinus' stay in Rome with the reign of Hadrian's successor, Antoninus Pius<sup>1</sup>. Tertullian further declares that Valentinus did not separate from the Church until the papacy of Eleutherus<sup>2</sup>, which did not commence until A.D. 174, and M. Amélineau seems therefore well-founded in his inference that Valentinus elaborated his system in Egypt while yet in the Church, and that he went to Rome in order to impose it upon the rest of the faithful<sup>3</sup>. If this be so, it would abundantly account for its far closer approximation to the orthodox faith than that of the Ophites, from which it appears to have been derived. Epiphanius tells us further that after quitting Rome, Valentinus died in Cyprus, where he made "a last shipwreck of his faith<sup>4</sup>." Could we place implicit faith in Epiphanius' highly-coloured statements, we might gather from this that Valentinus gave a fresh turn to his doctrines after finding himself away from the great cities in which he had hitherto spent his life.

However that may be, the time which, on the shortest computation, Valentinus passed in Rome was quite sufficient for him to set up a school there, and we are not surprised to hear that thereafter there was a body of Valentinians in the West, which was called the "Italic school." Innovating, as Tertullian said all heretics did, upon the system of their founder, they taught, as before mentioned, that Sige or Silence was a real spouse to the Ineffable Bythos or the Supreme Being and existed side by side with Him from eternity<sup>5</sup>. They further said that

<sup>1</sup> Irenaeus, Bk III. c. 4, § 1, vol. II. p. 17, Harvey; Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.* Bk IV. c. 11. Cf. Amélineau, *Gnost. Ég.* p. 170.

<sup>2</sup> Tertullian, *de Praescript.* c. XXX. Amélineau, *Gnost. Ég.* p. 175, objects to this.

<sup>3</sup> Amélineau, *Gnost. Ég.* p. 172, n. 1; *ibid.* p. 175.

<sup>4</sup> Epiphanius, *Pan., Haer.* XXXI. c. 2.

<sup>5</sup> Hippolytus, *op. cit.* Bk VI. c. 35, p. 296, Cruice.

the Dodecad or group of twelve aeons, of whom Sophia was the last, emanated not from Logos and Zoe, but from the third syzygy of Anthropos and Ecclesia<sup>1</sup>; and that the body of the historical Jesus was not material but psychic or from the world of the Demiurge<sup>2</sup>, which seems to include the view held by other Gnostics that it was a phantasm which only appeared to suffer on the Cross, but did not do so in reality. We know the names of several of the leaders of this Italic school, among whom were Ptolemy, Secundus, and Heracleon. It was the doctrine of the first of these apparently flourishing in Gaul in his time, which spurred on Irenaeus to write against them<sup>3</sup>; while Heracleon was called by Clement of Alexandria the most distinguished of the school of Valentinus and taught in the last-named city<sup>4</sup>. Ptolemy's doctrine as described by Irenaeus seems to have materially differed from that of his master only in the particulars just given; while Secundus is said by the same heresiologist to have divided the First Ogdoad into two tetrads, a right hand and a left, one of which he called light and the other darkness<sup>5</sup>. Over against this, we hear from Hippolytus of an Eastern school (*Διδασκαλία ἀνατολική*), which M. Amélineau shows satisfactorily to have most closely represented the teaching of Valentinus himself<sup>6</sup>, and which was carried on after his death by Axionicus and Bardesanes<sup>7</sup>. Of these, Axionicus is said to have taught in his native city of Antioch; while Bardesanes was evidently the same as the person called by the Syrians Bar Daisan of Edessa, whose name was still great in the time of Albiruni<sup>8</sup>. Theodotus, whose writings are quoted at some length by Clement of Alexandria, and Alexander, whose arguments as to the body of Jesus are rebutted by Tertullian, probably continued their teaching<sup>9</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Irenaeus, Bk I. c. 1, § 2, p. 13, Harvey.

<sup>2</sup> See n. 2, p. 116 *supra*.

<sup>3</sup> Irenaeus, *Prooem.* p. 4, Harvey.

<sup>4</sup> Clem. Alex. *Strom.* Bk IV. c. 9.

<sup>5</sup> Hippolytus, *op. cit.* Bk VI. c. 38, p. 302, Cruice. So Irenaeus, Bk I. c. 5, § 2, p. 101, Harvey. This appears to be hyperbole rather than dualism.

<sup>6</sup> Amélineau, *Gnost. Ég.* p. 189.

<sup>7</sup> Hippolytus, *op. cit.* Bk VI. c. 35, p. 296, Cruice.

<sup>8</sup> Albīrūnī, *Chronology of Ancient Nations*, ed. Sachau, 1879, pp. 27, 189.

<sup>9</sup> De Faye, *Intro. etc.* p. 105, n. 1; Tertullian, *de Carne Christi*, c. XVI.

The life of Bar Daisan, of which some particulars have been preserved for us by Bar Hebraeus and other Eastern historians of the Church, throws considerable light upon the attitude towards Christianity of Valentinus and that Anatolic School which best represented his teachings. Bar Daisan was born some fifty years after Valentinus of rich and noble parents in the town of Edessa in Mesopotamia, where he seems to have been educated in the company of the future king of the country, Abgar Bar Manu<sup>1</sup>. He was probably a Christian from his infancy, early became a Christian teacher, and withstood Apollonius, a Pagan Sophist who visited Edessa in the train of the Emperor Caracalla, making avowal of his readiness to suffer martyrdom for the faith. According to Eusebius, he had the greatest abhorrence of the dualistic doctrine of Marcion and wrote books against him in his native Syriac which were afterwards translated into Greek<sup>2</sup>. He, or perhaps his son Harmonius<sup>3</sup>, also composed a great number of hymns which were sung in the Catholic Churches of Mesopotamia and Syria; and it was not until a century and a half after his death that Ephrem Syrus, a doctor of the now triumphant and persecuting Church, found that these abounded in the errors of Valentinus, and deemed it necessary to substitute for them hymns of his own composition<sup>4</sup>. Valentinus seems in like manner to have lived in Rome as a Christian teacher, as we have seen, for at least sixteen years, and to have composed many psalms, some of which are quoted by Clement of Alexandria. If Tertullian is to be believed, he was qualified for the episcopate, which he must have had some chance of obtaining; and his want of orthodoxy cannot, therefore, have been manifest at the time or considered an objection to his candidature<sup>5</sup>. Moreover, Irenaeus says that Valentinus was the first who converted the so-called Gnostic

<sup>1</sup> See Hort, Bardaisan, in *Dict. Christian Biog.*

<sup>2</sup> Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.* Bk. iv. c. 30, says that Bar Daisan was first a Valentinian and afterwards recanted, "but did not entirely wipe away the filth of his old heresy."

<sup>3</sup> Rather a suspect name for a hymn writer.

<sup>4</sup> Ephrem Syrus' own date is given as 370 A.D., in *Dict. Christian Biog.* s.h.n.

<sup>5</sup> See n. 3, p. 117 *supra*.



heresy into the peculiar characteristics of his own school<sup>1</sup>; which agrees with Tertullian's statement that Valentinus was "at first a believer in the teaching of the Catholic Church in the Church of Rome under the episcopate of the Blessed Eleutherus<sup>2</sup>." It is evident, therefore, that long after his peculiar teaching was developed, he remained a member of the Church, and that it was not by his own wish that he left it, if indeed he ever did so.

One is therefore led to examine with some closeness the alleged differences between his teaching and that of the orthodox Christianity of his time; and these, although they may have been vitally important, seem to have been very few. With regard to his views as to the nature of the Godhead, as given above, they do indeed seem to differ *toto coelo* from those shadowed forth in the Canonical Gospels and Epistles, and afterwards defined and emphasized by the many Œcumenical and other Councils called to regulate the Church's teaching on the matter. The long series of aeons constituting his Pleroma or Fulness of the Godhead seems at first sight to present the most marked contrast with the Trinity of Three Persons and One God in the Creeds which have come down to us from the early Church. But is there any reason to suppose that Valentinus regarded the members of these Tetrads, Decads, and Dodecads as possessing a separate and individual existence or as having any practical importance for the Christian? We can hardly suppose so, when we consider the attitude of his immediate followers with regard to them. Some, as we have seen, were said to have put as the origin of all things, not a single principle but two principles of different sexes or, as Irenaeus says, a "dyad," thereby splitting the Supreme Being into two<sup>3</sup>. We can

<sup>1</sup> Irenaeus, Bk I. c. 5, § 1, p. 98, Harvey.

<sup>2</sup> See n. 2, p. 118 *supra*.

<sup>3</sup> This may have been due either to their Egyptian extraction, or to the necessity of putting the matter in a way that would be intelligible to their Egyptian disciples. Cf. Naville, *Old Egyptian Faith*, 1909, where he says that the Egyptian way of expressing abstract ideas is by metaphors. Their ancestors, the Egyptians of the early Dynasties, when they wanted to describe how gods of both sexes came forth from one single male deity, did so by means of a very coarse image. See Budge, *Papyrus of Nesri-*

imagine the outcry that this would have caused two centuries later when the different parties within the Christian Church were at each other's throats on the question whether the Son was of the same or only of like substance with the Father. Yet neither Valentinus, nor Ptolemy, nor Heracleon, nor any one of the Valentinian leaders seems to have borne the others any hostility on that account, to have dreamed of separating from them on such a pretext, or to have ceased to regard themselves both as Christians and followers of Valentinus. The only inference to be drawn from this is either that the account of their teaching has been grossly corrupted or that they considered such questions as matters of opinion merely, on which all might freely debate, but which were not to be taken as touchstones of the faith.

This view derives great support from the way in which Clement of Alexandria, Valentinus' countryman and the one among the Fathers who seems best fitted to understand him, regarded similar questions. M. Courdaveaux has shown with great clearness that Clement sometimes confounded the Third Person of the Trinity with the Second, and sometimes made Him His inferior. He also considered the Son as a simple creature of the Father, and, therefore, necessarily, of lower rank<sup>1</sup>. It was for such "heresies," as they were afterwards called, that Photius, who had Clement's now lost book of the *Hypotyposes* under his eyes, condemned him as a heretic, although his judgment in the matter has never been adopted by the Church. M. Courdaveaux also shows that Tertullian, even before he left the Church, looked upon both the Son and the Holy Spirit as only "members" of the Father, whom he considered to contain within Himself the complete divine sub-

Amsu, *Archaeologia*, vol. LII. (1890), pp. 440, 441. Cf. same author, *Hieratic Papyri in B.M.*

<sup>1</sup> Courdaveaux, *R.H.R.* Jan.-Fev. 1892, p. 293 and n. 7. Mgr Duchesne, *op. cit.* pp. 244, 245, agrees that Clement looked upon the Son as a creature only. Nor does there seem much difference between Valentinus' view of the relation between the Demiurge and the Unknown Father, and Clement's remarks about the Son whom he calls timeless and unbegotten and says that it is from Him that we must learn the "remote cause the Father of the Universe": *Strom.* Bk VII. c. 1. Cf. Justin Martyr, c. *Trypho.* c. 56.

stance; and this was certainly none of the heresies for which his memory was arraigned<sup>1</sup>. It by no means follows that Valentinus' teaching was the same as that of the Church in all its details; but it seems possible from these examples that he did not think it necessary to be more definite than the Church herself upon such points, and that he did not look upon them in any other light than as matters of opinion.

It should also be considered whether the language that Valentinus used regarding the nature and divisions of the Godhead is to be construed in the same sense and as implying the meaning that it would have done a few centuries later, when these points had been long discussed and the reasons for and against them marshalled and weighed. So far as can now be seen, he, like all Egyptians, never lost sight of allegory in dealing with matters transcending sense. Thus, when he speaks of the pretended union of Bythos and Sige, he is careful to say that there is nothing actually begotten, and that the whole story must be considered in a figurative sense:

"The Father [*i.e.* Bythos] alone," he says, "was unbegotten, not subject to conditions of place, nor time, taking no counsel, nor having any other being that can be comprehended by any recognized trope: but he was alone, and, as it is said, solitary, and resting in solitary repose within himself. And when he became fruitful, it seemed to him good at a certain time to engender and bring forth the most beautiful and perfect thing which he had within him: for he did not love solitude. For he was all love, but love is not love unless there is something to be loved<sup>2</sup>."

Between this and such Canonical texts as "God is love, and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God and God in him<sup>3</sup>," there may be a difference of application indeed, but none of language.

It seems, therefore, that in his theology Valentinus treated

<sup>1</sup> *R.H.R.* Jan.-Feb. 1891, p. 27. Tertullian's own heresy was of course Montanism. Harnack, *Hist. of Dogma*, Eng. ed., II. pp. 257, 258, says indeed that Hippolytus' own views of the Trinity coincide with those of Valentinus and are a relic of polytheism.

<sup>2</sup> Hippolytus, *op. cit.* Bk VI. c. 29, pp. 280, 281, Cruice.

<sup>3</sup> 2 John iv. 16. So Ἀγάπη "Love" is made the summit of the universe in the Ophite Diagram. See Chap. VIII *supra*.

the Ophitic ideas on which he worked very much as the Ophites had themselves treated the legends of Osiris and Attis. Dealing with their stories of aeons and powers as myths—that is to say as legends which whether true or not were only to be considered as symbols designed to show the way in which the world and man came forth from God—he thereby established his cosmology on a foundation which could be considered satisfactory by those half-heathen schools which had already contrived to reconcile the Pagan rites with the Jewish Scriptures and the Christian belief in the Mission of Jesus. But he went far beyond them in applying the same method of interpretation to all the acts of Jesus recorded in the Gospels. If Jesus were crucified upon the Cross, it was because its type the aeon Stauros had been set as a limit between that which is God and that which is not God but only godlike<sup>1</sup>. If He is said to go up to Jerusalem, it means that He went up from the world of matter to the Heaven of Sophia which is called Jerusalem<sup>2</sup>. If He were sent down to earth, it was because the higher worlds had already been put in the way of redemption by the gathering-in of Sophia into the Pleroma, the marriage of Sophia Without to Jesus the Joint Fruit, and the revelation to the Demiurge or God of the Jews that he was not the Supreme Being but only his reflection at several removes<sup>3</sup>. Every world is a copy of the one above it, every event must take place in every world in its turn, and all creation is like a chain which hung from the heavens is gradually drawn up to them, this creation of ours (κτίσις καθ' ἡμᾶς) being its last link<sup>4</sup>.

In all this, Valentinus wrote like a philosopher of the period, and, in fact, pretty much as Philo had done. But beyond this, he seems to have paid great attention to what is called the "pastoral" duty of a religious teacher or the care of souls, and to have busied himself to show how religion could be used to console and sustain the heart. All the fragments that we have left of the writings of himself and his followers are directed

<sup>1</sup> Neander, *Ch. Hist.* vol. II. p. 90.

<sup>2</sup> Heracleon, quoted by Origen in *Commentaries on St John*, Bk x. c. 19.

<sup>3</sup> Hippolytus, *op. cit.* Bk vi. c. 36, pp. 297, 298, Cruice.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* loc. cit. p. 298, Cruice.

towards this end; and would, from this point of view, do credit to any doctor of the Church. This is especially the case with the passage formerly quoted likening the human heart to an inn, of which Clement of Alexandria gives the actual words as follows:

“There is one good by whose coming is the manifestation, which is by the Son, and by Him alone can the heart become pure, by the expulsion of every evil spirit from the heart. For the multitude of spirits dwelling in it do not suffer it to be pure; but each of them performs his own deeds, insulting it often with unseemly lusts. And the heart seems to be treated somewhat like the courtyard of an inn. For the latter has holes and ruts in it, and is often filled with dung; men living filthily in it, and taking no care for the place because it belongs to others. So fares it with the heart as long as no thought is taken for it, and it is unclean and many demons dwell therein. But when the one good Father visits it, it is sanctified and gleams with light. And he who possesses such a heart is so blessed, that he shall see God<sup>1</sup>.”

It is no wonder that M. Amélineau speaks in terms of admiration of the eloquence with which Valentinus applies himself to the problem of the existence of evil, and that Neander should say that he in great measure realized the idea of Christianity<sup>2</sup>.

It seems indeed plain that Valentinus never intended to break with the Catholic Church and that it is not likely that he would have attempted during his life to found any organization that would have been in any way hostile to her<sup>3</sup>. Hence it is in vain to search for any special rites belonging to the sect; and it is most probable that he and his immediate followers continued to worship with the orthodox, and to resort to the priests of the Church at large for the administration of the Church's sacraments. Did they however demand any formal

<sup>1</sup> Clem. Alex. *Strom.* Bk II. c. 20.

<sup>2</sup> Amélineau, *Gnost. Ég.* p. 230; Neander, *Ch. Hist.* vol. II. p. 94.

<sup>3</sup> Neander, *op. et loc. cit.* p. 150 and note, says Clement of Alexandria declares that while Marcion wished to found a Church, the other Gnostics endeavoured to found schools, (*διδασκαλαί*) only. Clem. Alex. *Strom.* Bk VII. c. 15, seems to be the passage referred to; but in the present state of the text it may be doubted whether it will bear the construction Neander puts upon it.

initiation into their own doctrines or, in other words, attempt to keep them in any sense secret? One can only say that there is no proof that they did so. Clement of Alexandria and Origen both quote freely from the books written by Valentinus and his follower Heracleon in which their doctrines are openly set forth, and do not hint at any special difficulty they may have had in obtaining them. Irenaeus, Tertullian, and Hippolytus do the same thing with regard to the writings of Valentinus and Ptolemy, and Irenaeus tells us that he has obtained his knowledge of their doctrines not only by reading their commentaries (on Scripture) but by personal conversation with their disciples<sup>1</sup>. It does not, therefore, look as if before the legal procedure of the State or the more summary methods of the Christian mob could be used by the Catholics for the suppression of opinion and discussion, the Valentinians ever tried to do what Basilides had recommended to his followers, and to found what was really a secret society either within or without the bosom of the Church<sup>2</sup>.

It does not follow from this, however, that the Valentinians differed only in trifling points from the orthodox, or that the Fathers were wrong when they accused them of working grave injury to the nascent Church. The compliances with heathenism which they allowed those who thought with them, such as attendance at the circus and the theatres, partaking of heathen sacrifices, and flight or even the denial of their faith in time of persecution<sup>3</sup>, although justified by them with texts, such as: "That which is of the flesh is flesh; and that which is of the Spirit is Spirit," must have aroused the most bitter hostility from those wise governors of the Church who saw clearly whither the struggle between the Church and the Roman Empire was tending. The reward most constantly before the eyes of those about to obtain what was called "the crown" of martyrdom was that by thus giving their lives for the faith they would immediately after death become united with the Deity, instead

<sup>1</sup> Irenaeus, Bk I. Prooem. p. 4, Harvey.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Renan, *L'Église Chrétienne*, p. 165. The manner in which the Valentinians tried to make converts to their doctrines within the Church is described by Irenaeus, Bk III. c. 15, § 2, pp. 78, 80, Harvey, and Tertullian, *adv. Valentinianos*, c. 1.

<sup>3</sup> Renan, *L'Église Chrétienne*, pp. 152, 153, for references.

of waiting like other Christians for the Last Judgment<sup>1</sup>. Hence, intending martyrs were regarded even while yet alive with extraordinary reverence by the rest of the faithful, who, as we know from heathen as well as Christian writers, were in the habit of flocking into the prisons after them, weeping over them and kissing their fetters, and deeming it a privilege to minister in every way to the necessities of those who might by a sort of anticipation be regarded as already Divine<sup>2</sup>. It was on this veritable army of martyrs and on the enthusiasm which their triumphs excited that the Church mainly relied for victory in her warfare with the State. But how was this army to be recruited if the ideas of Valentinus once gained the upper hand in the Christian community, and it came to be thought that the same reward could be gained by acquaintance with the relative positions of the heavens and their rulers, and an accurate knowledge of the constitution of the universe? It was in time of persecution that the Valentinians oftenest found adherents—"then the Gnostics break out, then the Valentinians creep forth, then all the opponents of martyrdom bubble up," as Tertullian describes it<sup>3</sup>; and it is easy to understand that those who had most to lose in position or ease of life would grasp eagerly at any intermediate course which would enable them to keep their faith in the religion recently revealed to them without going through the terrible trials to which their orthodox teachers sought to subject them. Hence, the Valentinians probably in some sort justified Gibbon's remark that "the Gnostics were distinguished as the most polite, the most learned, and the most wealthy of the Christian name<sup>4</sup>"; and this alone would probably account for the undying hostility which the Church always exhibited towards them.

It was also the case that the spread of the tenets of Valentinus and his followers was attended with some peculiar social dangers of its own. Their division of mankind into the three

<sup>1</sup> Tertullian, *de Pudicitia*, and Pseudo Cyprian, *de Glor. Martyr. passim*.

<sup>2</sup> See Chap. VII, n. 1, p. 8 *supra*.

<sup>3</sup> Tertullian, *Scorpiace*, c. 1.

<sup>4</sup> Gibbon, *Decline and Fall*, Bury's ed. vol. II. p. 13. Cf. what Irenaeus, Bk I. c. 1, § 8, p. 36, Harvey, says as to the high price charged by the Valentinians for their teaching.

natural classes of spiritual, psychical, and hylic, if carried to its logical conclusion, brought with it some strange results. As the spiritual or pneumatics were saved in any event, and were, already even in this life, as was expressly said, a kind of "gods," it was manifestly not for them to trouble themselves about obedience to the moral law. The same conclusion applied to the hylics who were doomed to annihilation in any case, and whose struggles towards righteousness were bound to be inefficacious. There remained the psychics or animal men, for whom indeed a certain course of life was prescribed before they could attain salvation. But with the excessive freedom of interpretation and the licence of variation that Valentinus apparently allowed his followers, the exact limits of this course must always have been a matter of doubt; and it was here that many corruptions and debasements of his teaching began to show themselves. For it was an age when religious impostors of all kinds found an easy market in the credulity of their fellows, and charlatans everywhere abounded who were ready to support their claims to exclusive knowledge of holy things by false miracles and juggling tricks. Hippolytus gives us a long list of such devices including the means of answering questions in sealed letters, producing an apparition, and the like, which he declares the heresiarchs learnt from the magicians and used as proof of their own doctrines<sup>1</sup>. One knows at any rate from Lucian's evidence that religious pretenders like Alexander of Abonoteichos were not negligent of such practices, and charlatans of his kind were perhaps especially likely to be attracted to the timid and wealthy followers of Valentinus. A Valentinian impostor of this sort, if the Fathers are to be believed, was the Jewish magician Marcus, who taught a system corresponding in most points with that given above, but made use of it in his own interest as a means of moneymaking and for the corruption of women. Irenaeus speaks of the doctrine of this Marcus as being an especial snare to the Christians of Gaul, into which country Marcus or some follower of his perhaps travelled while Irenaeus was Bishop of Lyons<sup>2</sup>. By a mode of interpretation which was

<sup>1</sup> Hippolytus, *op. cit.* Bk. IV. c. 4, §§ 1-15.

<sup>2</sup> Irenaeus, Bk. I. cc. 7-8 *passim*, pp. 114-156, Harvey.



indeed a caricature of Valentinus' own, Marcus found proof of the existence and order of his aeons in the values of the letters composing Divine names and in words like Jesus and Christos<sup>1</sup>. He seems, too, to have himself administered baptism accompanied by exorcisms in the Hebrew language, and to have profaned the Eucharist with juggling tricks which made the cup to overflow and turned the water it contained into wine having the semblance of blood<sup>2</sup>. Thus, says Irenaeus, he contrived to draw away a great number from the Church and to seduce many of the faithful women. Valentinus, perhaps, is somewhat unfairly held responsible by the Fathers for such a perversion of his own teaching which he would, perhaps, have condemned as loudly as they. Scandals of the kind here hinted at were not unknown in the Catholic Church itself, and Christian ministers have been found in all ages, sects, and countries who have been willing to abuse for their own purposes the power which religion gives them over the opposite sex. It is true, too, that people, as has been well said, are seldom either as good or as bad as their creed, and the doctrine that "God sees no sin in His elect" has been preached in our own time without being followed by the "wretchlessness of most unclean living" which the 17th article of the Church of England declares to be one of the probable consequences of predestinarian teaching. The later Valentinians certainly did not forbid marriage, as is shown by the pathetic epitaph from a grave in the Via Nazionale quoted by Renan<sup>3</sup>, and thus avoided some of the moral dangers with which the practice of celibacy is sometimes reproached.

Of the fortunes of the Valentinian sect after the death of

<sup>1</sup> Thus he says that the Dove signifies Alpha and Omega, the first and the last, because A and Ω, like περιστέρα "dove," have the numerical value of 801.

<sup>2</sup> A similar miracle is performed by the risen Jesus in the Bruce Papyrus. See Chap. X *infra*.

<sup>3</sup>

a.

Ὡς πατρικὸν ποθέουσα, σύνναιμε, σύννευε, σοφή μου,  
 λούτροις χρεισαμένη Χ(ρειστο)ῦ μύρον ἄφθιτον, ἄγνόν,  
 Αἰώνων ἔσπευσας ἀθρ[ῆ]σαι θεία πρόσωπα,  
 βουλῆς τῆς μεγάλης μέγαν ἄγγελον, υἷδν ἀληθῆ,  
 [εἰς ν]υμφῶνα μολοῦσα καὶ εἰς [κόλπ]ους ἀνόρουσα[?]  
 [Αἰώνων πα]τρικούς κ[αί].....

Valentinus, we have very little precise information. Tertullian speaks of it as being in his time the most numerous society of heretics (*frequentissimum plane collegium haereticorum*), and in the West it extended from Rome, as we have seen, into Gaul and even into Spain, where it existed at the end of the 4th century<sup>1</sup>. Probably, however, it here propagated itself sporadically, its opinions appearing now and then among isolated writers and teachers, who probably drew their disciples carefully from among the Christian community, and only disclosed their system to those who showed some aptitude for it. Of such was doubtless "my fair sister Flora" (ἀδελφή μου καλὴ Φλόρα),

b.

Οὐκ ἔσχεν κοινὸν βιότου [τ]έλος ἥδε θανοῦσα·  
κάθανε καὶ ζῶει καὶ ὁρᾷ φάος ἄφθιτον ὄντως·  
ζῶει μὲν ζωῶσι, θανὲν δὲ θανοῦσιν ἀληθῶς.  
γαῖα, τί θαυμάζεις νέκυος γένος; ἡ πεφόβηται;

(Boeckh's) *C. I. G.* 9595a, t. I. and p. 594.

"Longing for the light of the Father, partner of my blood, partner of my bed, O my wise one!

Anointed at the font with the incorruptible and pure myrrh of Christ,  
Thou hast hastened to behold the divine faces of the Aeons, [and]  
The Great Angel of the Great Council, the true Son.

Thou hast gone to the nuptial couch and hast hurried to the fatherly  
bosoms of the Aeons

And.....

Though dying, she has not suffered the common end of life,  
She is dead, and yet lives and actually beholds the light incorruptible,  
To the living she is alive, and dead only to those really dead.

O Earth, why dost thou wonder at this new kind of shade? or dost  
thou fear it?"

This was engraved on a *cippus* of white marble found about three miles from Rome in the Via Latina and is now in the Kircher Museum. Renan's translation is given in *Marc Aurèle*, p. 147. That the lady's name was Flavia seems evident from the acrostic contained in the first verse. She must also have been a pneumatic or spiritual from her husband's confident expectation that she would be raised to the Heavenly Jerusalem and by his assertion of her deathlessness. Hence it may be inferred that Valentinus' disciples even when of the highest spiritual rank were allowed to marry. Cf. Clem. Alex. *Strom.* Bk. III. c. 17. The name "Angel of the Great Council" is applied to Christ by Justin Martyr (*c. Tryph.* c. 126) who says that He is so called by Ezekiel. The passage does not appear in the Canons.

<sup>1</sup> Matter, *Hist. du Gnosticisme*, t. II, p. 126, quoting St Jerome.

to whom Valentinus' successor Ptolemy wrote a letter setting out his tenets which Epiphanius has preserved for us<sup>1</sup>. As the quotations in it presuppose an acquaintance on her part with Old Testament history as well as with the Canonical Gospels and the Pauline Epistles, there can be little doubt that she was already a Christian convert. This mode of propaganda was the more obnoxious to the episcopate that it was likely to escape for some time the observation of the overseers of the Church, and is quite sufficient to explain the pains which bishops like Irenaeus and Hippolytus took to expose and refute the doctrines of the Valentinians, as well as what they say with doubtful accuracy about the secrecy which was observed concerning them<sup>2</sup>. In the East, things were probably different, and Heracleon's Commentaries on the Gospels, from which Origen quotes freely, would on the face of it have been useless unless addressed to the Christian community at large, and make no attempt to conceal their heretical teaching. In Egypt, however, the Gnostic teachers found a soil ready prepared for them. Egyptian Christianity, whether founded, according to tradition, by St Mark or not, never seems to have gone through the intermediate stage of observing the prescriptions of the Jewish Law while preaching its abrogation, and, in Alexandria especially, so far appealed to those learned in the Hellenistic and other philosophies as to necessitate the founding of a Christian school there for their study. The native Egyptians, too, had for millennia been given to mystic speculation about the nature of God and the destiny of the soul after death; and Valentinus, who must be presumed to have understood his own people, doubtless knew how to suit his teaching to their comprehension, even if he did not incorporate therein, as M. Amélineau has endeavoured to show, some of the more abstruse doctrines on these points of the old Egyptian religion<sup>3</sup>. Moreover, from the time of Hadrian onwards, the Egyptians were animated by a bitter and restless hatred against their

<sup>1</sup> Epiphanius, *Haer.* xxxiii. c. 3, pp. 401-413, Oehler. Cf. "the Elect Lady" to whom 2 John is addressed.

<sup>2</sup> It should be remembered that Valentinus had been dead some 50 years when Irenaeus and Hippolytus wrote.

<sup>3</sup> Amélineau, *Gnost. Ég.* Chap. v, pp. 281-320 *passim*.

Roman masters, and this feeling, which was by no means without justification, disposed them to embrace eagerly any ideas condemned by the bishops and clergy of Rome and of Constantinople. Hence the Valentinians had in Egypt their greatest chance of success, and the existence of documents like those described in the next chapter shows that Egyptian Christianity must have been largely permeated by their ideas perhaps up to Mohammedan times. Further East, the same causes produced similar effects, though in this case they were probably modified by the necessity of combating the remains of heathen religions which there lingered. The growing political power of the Catholic Church even before the conversion of Constantine probably drove the Valentinians to form separate communities wherever they were in sufficient numbers to do so, and thus is explained the possession by them of the "houses of prayer" of which the Constantinian Decree above quoted professes to deprive them. On the confines of the Empire and in provinces so far distant from the capital as Mesopotamia, these heretical communities probably lingered longer than in other places, and may have enjoyed, as in the case of Bardesanes, the protection and countenance of the native kinglets. Even here, however, the employment of the secular arm which its alliance with the State gave to the Church seems to have eventually forced them into an attitude of hostility towards it, as is shown by the "rabbling" of one of their conventicles in the way before mentioned. The accession of Julian brought them a temporary respite<sup>1</sup>; but on his death in the Persian campaign, the retreat of the Roman eagles probably gave them their quietus. Only in Egypt, it would seem, did their doctrines succeed in gaining anything like a permanent resting-place. Elsewhere, the rise of new heresies and especially of Manichaeism drove them out of their last strongholds.

Valentinianism, therefore, approved itself a stop-gap or temporary faith, which for two hundred years<sup>2</sup> acted as a half-

<sup>1</sup> Julian, *Ep.* 43, tells Hecebolius that the Arians of Edessa, "puffed up by their riches," have maltreated the Valentinians, and that he has therefore ordered the confiscation of the estates and treasure of the Church of Edessa. It is doubtful whether the edict can have been enforced before the emperor's death abrogated it.

<sup>2</sup> We get at a sort of minimum date for its persistence from the career

way house between heathenism and Christianity. In this capacity, it was singularly efficient, and was one of the forces which enabled, as Renan said, the ancient world to change from Paganism to Christianity without knowing it. In particular, it seems to have attracted to itself the attention of the learned and leisured class who were endeavouring, earnestly if somewhat timidly, to work out a rule of faith and conduct from the welter of creeds and philosophies with which the Empire was swamped during the first Christian centuries. Such a class is not that out of which martyrs are made, and is sure sooner or later to acquiesce in the opinions of the majority; but we may be certain that the learned and polite Valentinians would have listened with natural disgust to the simple and enthusiastic declamations of Jewish fishermen and artizans which had for their chief theme the coming destruction and overthrow of the social system in which they had grown up. The brilliant, if baseless, speculations of Valentinus, which even now have a certain attraction for the lovers of mysticism<sup>1</sup>, gave them exactly the kind of spiritual *pabulum* they craved for, and enabled them to wait in hope and patience until Christianity, forcing its way upward, as religions generally do, from the lowest class of society, had become the faith of the governing ranks. In this way, Valentinianism was probably one of the best recruiting grounds for the Catholic Church, and Renan is doubtless right when he says that no one who passed from Paganism through the Gnosticism of Valentinus and his fellows ever reverted to his former faith. Yet Valentinianism itself was doomed to but a short life, and in its original form probably did not survive its founder by much more than a century and a half. One of its later developments we shall see in the next chapter.

of St Ambrose, who had been a Valentinian in his youth (see Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.* Bk vi. c. 18), and was made bishop of Milan in 374 A.D., he being then 34 years old. The sect therefore had adherents in Italy about 360 A.D.

<sup>1</sup> It may be news to some that an attempt has lately been made to revive in Paris the heresy of Valentinus. See the *Contemporary Review* for May, 1897, or Jules Bois' *Les Petits Religions de Paris*, where a full account of the services and hymns of "L'Eglise Gnostique" is given. Its founder, Jules Doinel, was reconverted to Catholicism some time before his death. Its present head is M. Fabre des Essarts.

## CHAPTER X

### THE SYSTEM OF THE PISTIS SOPHIA AND ITS RELATED TEXTS<sup>1</sup>

IN 1765, the British Museum purchased from the celebrated antiquarian, Dr Askew, a parchment MS. written in Coptic<sup>2</sup>. On palaeographic grounds it is said to be not earlier than the vith century A.D., which agrees fairly with its state of preservation and the fact that it is written on both sides of the skins so as to present the appearance of a modern book<sup>3</sup>. Woide, then librarian of the Museum and pastor of the King's German Chapel at St James', published some extracts from it in his *Appendix to the Codex Alexandrinus* in 1799, and Dulaurier gave others in the *Journal Asiatique* in 1847<sup>4</sup>. It remained, however, untranslated until 1850, when Maurice Schwartze, a young German scholar who was sent over here to study our MSS. at the expense of the king of Prussia, turned it into Latin; and he having died soon after, his translation was published the following year by the learned Petermann. The British Museum text is written throughout in the Sahidic

<sup>1</sup> The chapter on Marcion and his doctrines should perhaps in strict chronological order follow on here, as Marcion's teaching was either contemporary with, or at most, but a few years later than, that of Valentinus. Cf. Salmon in *Dict. Christian Biog. s.v. Marcion, Valentinus*. But the earliest documents in the *Pistis Sophia* are, as will be seen, possibly by Valentinus himself, and, as all of them are closely connected with his doctrine, it seemed a pity to postpone their consideration.

<sup>2</sup> W. E. Crum, *Catalogue of the Coptic MS. in the Brit. Mus.*, 1905, p. 173, n. 2, says that it was bought at the sale of Askew's effects for £10. 10s. 0d., and that Askew himself bought it from a bookseller.

<sup>3</sup> H. Hyvernât, *Album de Paléographie Copte*, Paris, 1888.

<sup>4</sup> Matter, *Hist. du Gnost.* t. II. pp. 39-43, 347-348, and t. III. pp. 368-371.

dialect, and is the work of more than one scribe; but it seems to be agreed by those who have studied it with knowledge that the documents it contains are neither continuous nor necessarily related; and that it is in fact a series of extracts from earlier MSS.<sup>1</sup> Of these documents, the second commences with a heading, in a handwriting other than that of the scribe of this part, reading "the Second Book of Pistis Sophia"; but as such a heading implies that the foregoing document was the First Book of Pistis Sophia, the whole MS. is generally known by that name<sup>2</sup>.

The story presented in these two documents, although uncompleted, is, so far as it goes, perfectly consistent, and presupposes belief in a Gnostic system resembling at once those of the Ophites and of Valentinus. An introduction in narrative form informs us that Jesus, after rising from the dead, spent eleven years in teaching His disciples the arrangement of the heavenly places "only so far as the places" of a power whom He calls "the First Mystery," and declares to be "before all mysteries," and to be "within the veil," being "the father of the likeness of a dove<sup>3</sup>." The result of this

<sup>1</sup> See the present writer's article "Some Heretic Gospels" in the *Scottish Review* for July, 1893, where the MSS. treated of in this chapter and their divisions are described in detail. Schmidt, *Koptisch-gnostische Schriften*, Bd i. p. 14, speaks of this "Codex Askewianus" as "eine Miszellenhandschrift."

<sup>2</sup> Except where otherwise specified, subsequent references here to *Pistis Sophia* (in Italics) are to the first 253 pages of the Coptic MS. only.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. the ἑσώτερον τοῦ καταπετάσματος "within the veil" of Heb. vi. 19. For other instances of its use in this sense see Crum, *Cat. of the Coptic MSS. in the Brit. Mus.* p. 255, n. 1; and Clem. Alex. *Strom.* Bk v. c. 6. For the *dove*, Mr F. C. Conybeare, in a paper on the subject read before the Society of Historical Theology in Dec. 1892 (see *Academy* of 3rd Dec. 1892), said that the dove was "the recognised symbol of the Holy Spirit or Logos in the allegorizing theology of the Alexandrine Jews at the beginning of the 1st century A.D.," and quoted several passages from Philo in support. Cf. Origen, *cont. Cels.* Bk i. c. 31. But it was also the emblem, perhaps the totem-animal, of the great Asiatic goddess who, under the name of Astarte or Aphrodite, was worshipped as the *Mater viventium* or "Mother of all Living," with whose worship the serpent was also connected. It was doubtless to this that the text "Be ye wise as serpents, harmless as doves" refers. Both serpents and doves figure largely

limitation was, we are told, that the disciples were ignorant not only that any power existed higher than the First Mystery, but also of the origin of the "places" or worlds of those material and *quasi*-material powers who, here as in the earlier systems, are responsible for the governance of the world and the fate of mankind. While the disciples are sitting with Jesus on the Mount of Olives, however, He is carried away from them into Heaven by a great "power" or shape of light which descends upon Him. On His return, He tells them that this shape was "a vesture of light" or His heavenly nature which He had laid aside before being born into this world<sup>1</sup>. He also informs them that, when He first came into this world before His Incarnation, He brought with Him twelve powers which He took from "the Twelve Saviours of the Treasure house of Light<sup>2</sup>," and planted them in the mothers of the

in the Mycenaean and Cretan worship of the goddess. See Ronald Burrows, *Discoveries in Crete*, 1907, pp. 137, 138, and *Index* for references. In later Greek symbolism the dove was sacred to the infernal Aphrodite or Persephone whose name of Φερρεφάττα or Φερσεφάττα has been rendered "she who bears the dove." See de Chantot, "Statues Iconiques de Chypre" in *Gazette Archéologique*, 1878, p. 109.

<sup>1</sup> *Pistis Sophia*, p. 152, Copt. This metaphor is first met with in Philo, *Quaest. in Genesim*, Bk I. c. 53, who declares that the "coats of skin" of Gen. iii. 21 are the natural bodies with which the souls of the protoplasts were clothed. It was a favourite figure of speech with the Alexandrian Jewish writers. So in the *Ascensio Isaiae*, c. iv. 16, 17: "But the saints will come with the Lord with their garments which are now stored up on high in the seventh heaven: with the Lord will they come, whose spirits are clothed.... And afterwards they will turn themselves upward in their garments, and their body will be left in this world." Cf. Charles, *Ascension of Isaiah*, pp. 34, 35, and *Eschatology* (Jowett Lectures), pp. 399 *sqq.*, where he says that this was also the teaching of St Paul.

<sup>2</sup> The word Σωτήρ, which here as elsewhere in the book appears without any Coptic equivalent, evidently had a peculiar signification to the Valentinian Gnostics. Irenaeus, Bk I. c. 1, § 1, p. 12, Harvey, says that it was the name they gave to Jesus οὐδὲ γὰρ κύριον ὀνομάζειν αὐτὸν θέλουσι "for they do not choose to call Him Lord." In the later part of the book, the document called Μέρος τευχῶν Σωτήρος (p. 253, Copt.) says that "he is saviour and ἀχώρητος (i.e. not to be confined in space), who finds the words of the mysteries and the words of the Third Receptacle which is within



twelve Apostles, so that when these last were born into the world they were given these powers instead of receiving, like other men, souls "from the archons (or rulers) of the aeons<sup>1</sup>." He also describes how He appeared among the archons of the Sphere in the likeness of the angel Gabriel, and found among them the soul of "Elijah the Prophet<sup>2</sup>." This He caused to be taken to "the Virgin of Light," that it might be planted in Elizabeth, the mother of John the Baptist<sup>3</sup>, (*i.e.* the inmost of the three) and excelleth them all." From which it would appear that the chief qualification of a saviour in the eyes of the later Valentinians was that he was not restricted to his special place in the universe, but could visit at will the worlds below him. We seem therefore to be already getting near the Manichaean idea of *Burkhans* (messengers or Buddhas) who are sent into the world for its salvation. Cf. Chapter XIII *infra*.

<sup>1</sup> So that Judas Iscariot received a super-excellent soul as well as the other eleven, unless we are to suppose that his successor and substitute Matthias was one of those chosen from the beginning. It is curious that neither in this nor in any other Valentinian document is there any allusion to the treason of Judas. The phrase "Archons of the aeons" means, as will be seen later, the rulers of the twelve signs of the Zodiac.

<sup>2</sup> The "Sphere," here as elsewhere in the book, means the sphere of the visible firmament, which is below that of Heimarmene or Destiny.

<sup>3</sup> This *παρθένος τοῦ φωτός* or Virgin of Light appears here, I think, for the first time in any Gnostic document, although she may have been known to the Valentinians. See Irenaeus, Bk II. c. 47, § 2, p. 368, Harvey. She is, perhaps, a lower analogue of Sophia Without, and is represented as seated in or near the material sun which is said to give its light in its "true form" only in her τόπος or place, which is 10,000 times more luminous than that of the Great Propator or Forefather mentioned later (*Pistis Sophia*, p. 194, Copt.). Her function seems to be the "judging" of the souls of the dead, which does not apparently involve any weighing of evidence, but merely the examination of them to see what "mysteries" they have received in previous incarnations, which will determine the bodies in which they are reincarnated or their translation to higher spheres (*ibid.* pp. 239, 292). She also places in the soul a power which returns to her, according to the Μέρος τευχῶν Σωτήριος, on the death of its possessor (*ibid.* p. 284, Copt.), thereby discharging the functions assigned in the last book of Plato's *Republic* to Lachesis. She is also on the same authority (*i.e.* the M. r. Σ.) one of the rulers of the disk of the sun and of that of the moon (*ibid.* pp. 340-341, Copt.), and her place is one of the "places of the Middle" and is opposite to the kingdom of Adamas, which is called the "head of the aeons" (*ibid.* p. 236, Copt.). She reappears in Manichaeism

and He adds that He bound to it a power which He took from "the Little Iao the Good, who is in the middle." The object of this was, we are told, that John the Baptist might prepare the way of Jesus and baptize with water for the remission of sins.

Jesus then proceeds to describe His own Incarnation. When speaking, still in the shape of the angel Gabriel, with Mary His "mother after the body of matter," He planted in her the first power he had received from "Barbelo," which was the body He had worn "in the height<sup>1</sup>"; and, in the and it is said in the *Acta Archelai* that at the destruction of the world she will pass into "the ship" of the moon along with Jesus and other powers where she will remain until the whole earth is burnt up (c. XIII. p. 21 of *Hegemonius, Acta Archelai*, Beeson's ed., Leipzig, 1906, p. 21). In the Turfan texts (F. W. K. Müller, *Handschriften-Reste in Estrangelo Schrift aus Turfan*, III. Teil, Berlin, 1904, p. 77) appears a fragment of a prayer in which is invoked *yišō kanīgrōšānā* which Dr Müller translates 'Ἰησοῦς παρθένος τοῦ φωτός, "Jesus, Virgin of Light"; but it is possible that there is some mistake in the reading.

<sup>1</sup> Barbelo is a name very frequently met with in the earlier heresiologists. Irenaeus, Bk I. c. 26, §§ 1, 2, pp. 221-226, Harvey, declares that there was a sect of Simonians called Barbeliotae "or Naassenes" who suppose "a certain indestructible (the Latin version says "never-ageing") Aeon in a living virgin spirit whom they call Barbelo (masc.)," and gives an account of a string of other aeons issuing not from, but at the prayer of, this Barbelo, which is far from clear in the present state of the text. The sect appears, from what can be made out of his description, to have resembled the Ophites, of which it may have been a branch. Hippolytus, however, says nothing of them, and the account of Epiphanius (*Haer.* xxv. and xxvi., Vol. II, pt 1, pp. 160, 184, Oehler, is untrustworthy, inasmuch as he assigns the worship of Barbelo to two sects, one of which he calls Nicolaitans and the other Gnostics simply. To both of them he attributes after his manner unimaginably filthy rites, and it is plain from his making Barbelo the mother of Jaldabaoth and giving her a seat in the eighth heaven that he confuses her wilfully or otherwise with the Sophia of the Ophites. Her place in the system of the *Pistis Sophia* will be described in the text. The name is said by Harvey to be derived from the Syriac *Barba elo*, the Deity in Four or God in Tetrad, and the derivation is approved by Hort (*Dict. of Christian Biog. s.h.n.*). It appears more likely, however, that it is to be referred to the Hebrew root בבל "Babel" or confusion, a derivation which Hort also mentions. In Irenaeus' Greek text the name is spelt βαρβηλώ, in the Latin "Barbelo" with an accusative "Barbelon," and in Epiphanius βαρβηλώ and βαρβήρω. If we might alter this last into βαρβαριώθ, we might see

place of the soul, a power which He received from "the Great Sabaoth the Good, who is in the place of the right." After this digression, He resumes His account of what happened after His receiving the vesture of light on the Mount of Olives, and declares that He found written in this vesture five mysterious words "belonging [viz. in the language of] to the height<sup>1</sup>," which He interprets to His disciples thus :

"The mystery who is without the world, through whom all things exist, he is the giving forth and the lifting up of all and he has put forth all the emanations and the things which are in them all. And it is through him that all the mysteries exist and all their places. Come unto us, for we are thy fellows and thy members<sup>2</sup>! We are one with thee, for thou and we are one. This is the First Mystery which existed since the beginning in the Ineffable One

it in a great number of magic spells of the period. Cf. Wessely, *Ephesia Grammata*, Wien, 1886, pp. 26, 28, 33, 34.

<sup>1</sup> *Pistis Sophia*, p. 16, Copt. The five words are *zama*, *zama*, *ôzza*, *rachama*, *ôzai*. Whatever they may mean, we may be quite sure that they can never contain with their few letters the three pages or so of text which are given as their interpretation. It is possible that the letters are used acrostically like the A G L A, i.e. גִּיבֹר לַעֲיֹלָם אֲדֹנָי (? Ahih ? אהיה ? *Ate Gibor Lailam Adonai*, "The mighty Adonai for ever" (or "thou art the mighty and eternal Lord") commonly met with in mediaeval magic. Cf. Peter de Abano, *Heptameron, seu Elementa Magica*, Paris, 1567, p. 563 ; or, for other examples, F. Barrett, *The Magus*, 1801, Bk II. pp. 39, 40. The notable feature in these mysterious words is the quantity of Zetas or ζ's that they contain which points to the use of some sort of table like that called by Cabalists *ziruph*, or a cryptogram of the *aaaaa*, *aaaab*, kind. It should be noticed that Coptic scribes were often afflicted with what has been called Betacism or the avoidance of the letter Beta or β by every means, which frequently led to the substitution for it of ζ as in the case of *Jalda-baoth* = Ιαλδαζαω given above (Chap. VIII, n. 3, p. 46 *supra*).

<sup>2</sup> This idea of certain powers being the members or "limbs" of him from whom they issue recurs all through the *Pistis Sophia*. Cf. especially p. 224, Copt., where it is said that the *χωρήματα* or "receptacles" of the Ineffable go forth from his last limb. It is probably to be referred to the conception of the Supreme Being as the *Μαν κατ' ἐξουχίην*, which we have seen current among the Ophites. See Chap. VIII, n. 2, p. 38 *supra*. That the ancient Egyptians used the same expression concerning their own gods and especially Ra, see Moret, "Le Verbe créateur et révélateur," *R.H.R.*, Mai-Juin, 1909, p. 257. Cf. Amélineau, *Gnosticisme Égyptien*, p. 288. So Naville, *Old Egyptian Faith*, p. 227.

before he [*i.e.* the First Mystery] went forth, and we all are his name<sup>1</sup>.

"Now therefore we all await thee at the last boundary which is the last mystery from within<sup>2</sup>. This also is part of us. Now therefore we have sent to thee thy vesture which is thine from the beginning, which thou didst place in the last boundary, which is the last boundary from within, until the time should be fulfilled according to the commandment of the First Mystery. And now that the time is fulfilled, clothe thyself in it! Come unto us, for we all stand near to thee that we may clothe thee with all the glory of the First Mystery by His command. Which glory is as two vestures, besides that which we have sent unto thee. For thou art worthy of them since thou art preferred before us and wast made before us. Wherefore the First Mystery has sent thee by us the mystery of all his glory, which is as two vestures. In the first is the glory of all the names of all the mysteries and of all the emanations which are in the ranks of the receptacles of the Ineffable One. And in the second vesture is the glory of the names of all the mysteries and of all the emanations which are in the ranks of the

<sup>1</sup> That is to say, their names make up his name as letters do a word. So in the system of Marcus referred to in Chap. IX *supra*, Irenaeus (Bk I. c. 8, § II, p. 146, Harvey) explains that the name of Jesus (*Ἰησοῦς*) which might be uttered is composed of six letters, but His unutterable name of twenty-four, because the names of the first Tetrad of *Ἄππρος* (Bythos), *Σιγή*, *Πατήρ* (Monogenes or Nous) and *Ἀλήθεια* contain that number of letters. See also § 5 of same chapter. Those who wish to understand the system are recommended to read the whole of the chapter quoted. As Irenaeus has the sense to see, there is no reason why the construction from one root of names founded on the principle given should not go on for ever.

<sup>2</sup> This is probably either the Horos or Stauros that we have seen brought into being in the teaching of Valentinus as a guard to the Pleroma, or, as is more probable, an antitype of the same power in the world immediately above ours. That there was more than one Horos according to the later Valentinians appears plain from the words of Irenaeus above quoted (see Chap. IX, n. 1, p. 105 *supra*). Probably each world had its Horos, or Limit, who acted as guard to it on its completion. That in this world, the Cross, personified and made pre-existent, fulfils this office seems evident from the Gospel of Peter, where it is described as coming forth from the Sepulchre with Jesus (*Mem. Miss. Archéol. du Caire*, 1892, t. ix. fasc. 1, v. 10). Cf. too, Clem. Alex. *Paedagogus*, Bk III. c. 12, and *Strom.* Bk II. c. 20.

two receptacles of the First Mystery. And in this vesture which we have sent thee now, is the glory of the name of the Recorder who is the First Precept<sup>1</sup>, and the mystery of the Five Marks<sup>2</sup>, and the mystery of the great Legate of the Ineffable One who is the same as that Great Light<sup>3</sup>, and the mystery of the Five Prohegumeni who are the same as the Five Parastatae<sup>4</sup>. And there is also in that vesture the glory of the name of the mystery of all the ranks of the emanations of the Treasure-house of Light, and of their Saviours, and the ranks of those ranks which are the Seven Amen and which are the Seven Sounds, and also the Five Trees<sup>5</sup> and also

<sup>1</sup> Ὁ μὲνυρος. The word is not known in classical Greek (but cf. μὲνυρῆς "a revealer"), and appears to have its root in μῆν "the moon," as the *measure* of the month. From the Coptic word here translated "Precept," we may guess it to be a personification of the Jewish Law or *Torah* which, according to the Rabbis, before the creation of the world existed in the heavens. Later in the book it is said that it is by command of this power that Jeû places the aeons (p. 26, Copt.); that the souls of those who receive the mysteries of the light (i.e. the psychics) will have precedence in beatitude over those who belong to the places of the First Precept (p. 196, Copt.); that all the orders of beings of the Third χώρημα are below him (p. 203, Copt.); and that he is "cut into seven mysteries," which may mean that his name is spelled with seven letters (p. 219, Copt.).

<sup>2</sup> Χάραγμα. Are these the letters mentioned in last note?

<sup>3</sup> Πρεσβευτής, properly, "ambassador" or "agent." Doubtless a prototype of our sun. Elsewhere in the book, Jesus tells His disciples that He brought forth from Himself "at the beginning" power (not a power), which He cast into the First Precept, "and the First Precept cast part of it into the Great Light, and the Great Light cast part of that which he received into the Five Parastatae, the last of whom breathed part of that which he received into the Kerasmos or Confusion" (p. 14, Copt.). The Great Light is also called the Χάραγμα of the Light, and is said to have remained without emanation (p. 219, Copt.).

<sup>4</sup> Παρστάται, "Comrades" or "witnesses" or "helpers." They can here hardly be anything else but the Five Planets. It is said later that it was the last Parastates who set Jeû and his five companions in the "Place of the Right Hand" (p. 193, Copt.). When the world is destroyed, Jesus is to take the perfect souls into this last Parastates where they are to reign with him (p. 230, Copt.) for 1000 years of light which are 365,000 of our years (p. 243, Copt.). Προηγούμενος "Forerunner" does not seem to occur in classical Greek.

<sup>5</sup> We hear nothing more definite of these Five Trees, but they appear again in Manichaeism, and are mentioned in the Chinese treatise from Tun-huang, for which see Chap. XIII *infra*.

the Three Amen, and also the Saviour of the Twins who is the boy of a boy<sup>1</sup>, and the mystery of the Nine Guards of the Three Gates of the Treasure-house of Light. And there is also within it the glory of the name which is on the right, and of all those who are in the middle. And there also is the glory of the name of the Great Unseen One, who is the Great Forefather<sup>2</sup>, and the mysteries of the

<sup>1</sup> This is a most puzzling expression and seems to have baffled the scribe, as he speaks of them, when he comes to repeat the phrase (p. 216, Copt.), as the "Twin Saviours," which is a classical epithet of the Dioscuri. In Pharaonic Egypt, Shu and Tefnut the pair of gods who were first brought into being by the Creator were sometimes called "The Twins." See Naville, *Old Egyptian Faith*, p. 120. Cf. p. 171 *infra*.

<sup>2</sup> It is evident from the context that we here begin the enumeration of the Powers of the Left, who are hylic or material and therefore the least worthy of the inhabitants of the heavens. According to Irenaeus, the Valentinians held that all of them were doomed to destruction. Τριῶν ὄντων, τὸ μὲν ὑλικόν, ὃ καὶ ἀριστερόν καλοῦσι, κατὰ ἀνάγκην ἀπόλλυσθαι λέγουσιν, ἅτε μηδεμίαν ἐπιδέξασθαι πνοὴν ἀφθαρσίας δυνάμενον (Irenaeus, Bk I. c. 1, § 11, p. 51, Harvey). "There being three forms of existences, they say that the hylic, which they call the left hand, must be destroyed, inasmuch as it cannot receive any breath of incorruption." So in the Bruce Papyrus to be presently mentioned, the "part of the left" is called the land of Death. At their head stands "the Great Unseen Propator," who throughout the *Pistis Sophia* proper is called by this title only, and occupies the same place with regard to the left that Iao does in respect of the middle, and Jeû of the right. In the Μέρος τευχῶν Σωτήρος (p. 359, Copt.) he is called by the name ἀγραμαχαμαρεχ which frequently appears in the Magic Papyri. It is there spelt indifferently ακραμνικαμαρι, ακραμμαχαρι, ακραμμαχαμαρει, ακραμμαχαχαχαρι, and in a Latin inscription on a gold plate, *acramihamari* (see Wessely, *Ephesia Grammata*, p. 22, for references), which last may be taken to be the more usual pronunciation. One is rather tempted to see in the name a corruption of ἀγραμματέον in the sense of "which cannot be written," but I can find no authority for such a use of the word. As the ruler of the material Cosmos he might be taken for the Cosmocrator who, as we have seen, is called by Valentinus Diabolos or the Devil (but see n. 1, p. 152 *infra*). Yet he cannot be wholly evil like Beelzebuth for it is said in the text (p. 41, Copt.) that he and his consort Barbelo sing praises to the Powers of the Light. So in the Μέρος τευχῶν Σωτήρος (p. 378, Copt.) he is represented as begging for purification and holiness when the Great Name of God is uttered. It is plain also from the statements in the text (pp. 43, 44, Copt.) that in the *Pistis Sophia* he, Barbelo, and the Αὐθάδης or Arrogant Power make up a triad called the great τριδυναμεῖς or

Three Triple Powers, and the mystery of all their places, and the mystery of all their unseen ones, and of all the dwellers in the Thirteenth Aeon, and the name of the Twelve Aeons with all their Archons, all their Archangels, all their Angels and all the dwellers in the Twelve Aeons, and all the mystery of the name of all the dwellers in Heimarmene<sup>1</sup>, and all the heavens, and the whole mystery of the name of all the dwellers in the Sphere and their firmaments with all they contain and their places. Lo, then, we have sent unto thee this vesture, which none knoweth from the First Precept downward, because that the glory of its light was hidden within it, and the Spheres and all the places from the First Precept downward knew it not. Hasten, then, do on the vesture, and come unto us, for we have remained near thee to clothe thee with these two vestures by the command of the First Mystery until the time fixed by the Ineffable One should be fulfilled. Now, then, the time is fulfilled. Come unto us quickly, that we may clothe thee with them until thou hast accomplished the entire ministry of the completion of the First Mystery, the ministry which has been laid upon thee by the Ineffable One. Come then unto us quickly in order that we may clothe thee with them according to the command of the First Mystery. For yet a little while, a very little while, and thou wilt cease to be in the world. Come then quickly, that thou mayest receive all the glory which is the glory of the First Mystery."

This long address, in which the whole arrangement of the universe as the author supposes it to exist is set forth, is clearly the utterance of the heavenly powers belonging to the higher worlds whom Jesus has left on His descent to earth. Unintelligible as it seems at first sight, it can be explained to some extent by the tenets of the Ophites described in Chapter VIII, which formed, as we have seen, the basis on which Valentinus also constructed his system. The Ineffable

"Triple Powers" from whom are projected the powers called the "Twenty-four Invisibles." In another document of the same MS. (p. 361, Copt.) a power from him is said to be bound in the planet Saturn.

<sup>1</sup> This *Εἰμαρμένη* or "Destiny" is the sphere immediately above our firmament. It is evidently so called, because on passing through it the soul on its way to incarnation receives the Moira or impress of its own destiny, of which it cannot afterwards rid itself except by the grace of the mysteries or Valentinian sacraments. Cf. Chap. IX, n. 3, p. 115 *supra*.

One may be assumed to be the Bythos whom both the Ophites and Valentinus called by that epithet<sup>1</sup> and held to be the first and final source of all being. Although something is said here and elsewhere in the book of his "receptacles" and "places<sup>2</sup>," no particulars of them are given, they being apparently reserved for a future revelation<sup>3</sup>. The First Mystery, however, is spoken of later as a "Twin Mystery, looking inward and outward<sup>4</sup>," which seems to correspond to the Father-and-Son of the Ophite diagram. Later in the book, Jesus reveals to His disciples that He Himself is the First Mystery "looking outward<sup>5</sup>," and this seems to show that the author's conception of the relations between Him and the First Person of the Trinity did not differ much from that of the Catholic Church<sup>6</sup>. The world of this First Mystery extends downwards as far as what is here, as in the Epistle to the Hebrews<sup>7</sup>, called "the veil," which is perhaps the veil of sense separating all things contaminated by mixture with matter from the Divine. This First Mystery is said to consist of twenty-four "mysteries"; but these do not seem to be, as in the older systems, places or worlds, but rather attributes or aspects of the Deity which together go to make up His whole being, as a number of letters are required to make up a word or name<sup>8</sup>. But from some words of Jesus

<sup>1</sup> Ἀρχήτος. Irenaeus, Bk i. c. 5, § 1, p. 99, Harvey. *Innominabilis*, Tertullian, *adv. Valentinianos*, c. 37. So Clem. Alex. *Strom.* Bk v. c. 10, says that God is ineffable, being incapable of being expressed even in His own power.

<sup>2</sup> Χωρηματα: τόποι.

<sup>3</sup> That [*i.e.* the First] mystery knoweth why there emanated all the places which are in the receptacle of the Ineffable One and also all which is in them, and why they went forth from the last limb of the Ineffable One. . . . These things I will tell you in the emanation of the universe. *Pist. Soph.* p. 225, Copt.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* p. 222, Copt.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* p. 127, Copt.

<sup>6</sup> See Chap. IX, pp. 121, 122 *supra*.

<sup>7</sup> Heb. vi. 19.

<sup>8</sup> p. 203, Copt. Why there should be 24, when the dodecad or group of Aeons in the world above was only 12, it is difficult to say. But Hippolytus supplies a sort of explanation when he says (*op. cit.* Bk vi. c. 33, p. 292, Cruice): Ταῦτά ἐστιν ἀλέγουσιν· ἔτι [δὲ] πρὸς τοῦτοις, ἀριθμητικὴν ποιούμενοι



given later in the book, it would appear that its author did not at all discard the view of the earlier Ophites that the Supreme Being was to be figured as of human form, for we find him remarking that the First Mystery himself proceeded from the "last limb" or member of the Ineffable One<sup>1</sup>. For the rest, it need only be pointed out here that the powers who address Jesus in the quotation just given also speak of themselves as His "members"; but that notwithstanding this, they must be looked upon as purely spiritual entities having no direct connection with any material forms except as paradigms or patterns<sup>2</sup>. Whatever the worlds which they

τὴν πᾶσαν αὐτῶν διδασκαλίαν, ὡς προείπον [τοὺς] ἐντὸς Πληρώματος Αἰῶνας τριάκοντα πάλιν ἐπιπροβεβληκέναι αὐτοῖς κατὰ ἀναλογίαν Αἰῶνας ἄλλους, ἢ ᾗ τὸ Πλήρωμα ἐν ἀριθμῷ τελείῳ συνηθροισμένον. 'Ὡς γὰρ οἱ Πυθαγορικοὶ διείλον εἰς δώδεκα καὶ τριάκοντα καὶ ἑξήκοντα, καὶ λεπτὰ λεπτῶν εἰσὶν ἐκείνοις, δεδῆλωται· οὕτως οὐ τοι τὰ ἐντὸς Πληρώματος ὑποδιαυροῦσιν. "This is what they say. But besides this, they make their whole teaching arithmetical, since they say that the thirty Aeons within the Pleroma again projected by analogy other Aeons, so that thereby the Pleroma may be gathered together in a perfect number. For the manner in which the Pythagoreans divide [the cosmos] into 12, 30, and 60 parts, and each of these into yet more minute ones, has been made plain" [see *op. cit.* Bk VI. c. 28, p. 279, where Hippolytus tells us how Pythagoras divided each Sign of the Zodiac into 30 parts "which are days of the month, these last into 60 λεπτὰ, and so on"]. "In this way do they [the Valentinians] divide the things within the Pleroma." Cf. *Μέρος τευχῶν Σωτήρος* p. 364, Copt. In another book of the *Philosophumena* (Bk IV. c. 7 *Περὶ τῆς ἀριθμητικῆς τέχνης*) he explains how the Pythagoreans derived infinity from a single principle by a succession of odd and even or male and female numbers, in connection with which he quotes Simon Magus (*op. cit.* p. 132, Cruice). The way this was applied to names he shows in the chapter *Περὶ μαθηματικῶν* (*op. cit.* Bk IV. c. 11, pp. 77 *sqq.*, Cruice) which is in fact a description of what in the Middle Ages was called Arithmomancy, or divination by numbers.

<sup>1</sup> p. 224, Copt. See also p. 241, Copt.—a very curious passage where the Ineffable One is called "the God of Truth without foot" (cf. Osiris as a mummy) and is said to live apart from his "members."

<sup>2</sup> In the beginning of the *Μέρος τευχῶν Σωτήρος* (p. 252, Copt.) it is said of the Ineffable that "there are many members, but one body." But this statement is immediately followed by another that this is only said "as a pattern (*παράδειγμα*) and a likeness and a resemblance, but not in truth of shape" (p. 253, Copt.).

inhabit may be thought to be like—and Jesus more than once tells His disciples that there is nothing on earth to which they can be compared—we can only say that they are two in number, and that it is the two “vestures of light” sent to Jesus on the Mount of Olives, or, in other words, His two natures, which give Him the means of ascending to the heavens of the Ineffable One and of the First Mystery respectively. If the author ever intended to discuss them further, he has certainly not done so in the *Pistis Sophia* properly so called<sup>1</sup>.

On the other hand, the worlds and powers existing “below the veil,” or within the comprehension of the senses, and symbolized by the third and inferior “vesture” sent to Jesus, are indicated even in the address given above with fair particularity. Their names and relative positions are not easy to identify; but, thanks to some hints given in other parts of the book, the universe below “the veil” may be reconstructed thus<sup>2</sup>:—its upper part contains the Treasure-house of light where, as its name implies, the light as it is redeemed from matter is stored up. There are below it five other worlds called the Parastatae or Helpers, in one of which Jesus is to reign during the millennium, and the ruler of the last of which arranges the pure spirits who dwell below it<sup>3</sup>. The highest

<sup>1</sup> What he does say is that the Ineffable One has two *χωρήματα* or receptacles and that the second of these is the *χώρημα* of the First Mystery. It is, I think, probable that an attempt to describe both these *χωρήματα* is made in one of the documents of the Bruce Papyrus. See pp. 191, 192 *infra*.

<sup>2</sup> In addition to the enumeration contained in the so-called interpretation of the mysterious “Five Words,” there appears in the 2nd part of the *Pistis Sophia* (pp. 206 *sqq.* Copt.) a long rhapsody in which it is declared that a certain mystery knows why all the powers, stars, and heavenly “places” were made. These are here again set out *seriatim*, and as the order in the main corresponds with that in the Five “Words,” translated in the text, it serves as a check upon this last. The order of the powers in the text was given in the article in the *Scottish Review* before referred to, and, although this was written 20 years ago, I see no occasion to alter it.

<sup>3</sup> It is the “last Parastates” who places Jēū and his companion in “the place of those who belong to the right hand according to the arrangement (i.e. *οικονομία*) of the Assembly of the Light which is in the Height of the Rulers of the Aeons and in the universes (*κοσμοί*) and every race which is therein” (p. 193, Copt.). A later revelation is promised as to these,

spirit in the Treasure-house is called the First Precept or the Recorder, and with him is associated the Great Light, who is said to be the "legate" of the Ineffable One<sup>1</sup>. In the Treasure-house there are also the orders of spirits set out in the address just quoted, the only two to which it is necessary to refer here being the Five Trees<sup>2</sup> and the Twelve Saviours. From the Five Trees emanated the great "Powers of the Right Hand" to be next mentioned; while, as is before described, the Twelve Saviours furnished the spotless souls required for the Twelve Apostles<sup>3</sup>. The lower part of the same universe is called the Kerasmos or Confusion, because here the light, which in the upper part is pure, is mingled with matter. It is divided in the first instance into three parts, the Right-hand, the Middle, and the Left-hand<sup>4</sup>. Of these, the Right-hand contains the spirits who emanated from the Five Trees of the Treasure-house. At their head is Jeû, who has supreme authority over all the Confusion<sup>5</sup>. He is called the Overseer

but in the meantime it is said that Jeu emanated from the chosen or pure (εὐδικρινής) light of the first of the Five Trees (*loc. cit.*).

<sup>1</sup> See nn. 1 and 3, p. 141 *supra*. As has been said, it is difficult not to see in this "1st Precept" a personification of the Torah or Jewish Law.

<sup>2</sup> See n. 3, p. 146 *supra*.

<sup>3</sup> See n. 2, p. 136 *supra*.

<sup>4</sup> So Secundus, Valentinus' follower, taught according to Hippolytus (*v. Chap. IX supra*) "that there is a right and a left tetrad, i.e. light and darkness." This may be taken to mean that the constitution of the light-world was repeated point for point in the world of darkness. The middle world is of course that where light and darkness mingle.

<sup>5</sup> Jeû is generally called the ἐπίσκοπος or overseer of the Light. He it is who has placed the Rulers of the Aeons so that they always "behold the left" (p. 26, Copt.). He is also said to have bound "in the beginning" the rulers of the Aeons and of Destiny and of the Sphere in their respective places (p. 34, Copt.), and that each and every of them will remain in the τάξις or order and walk in the δρόμος or course in which he placed them. We also hear in the *Pistis Sophia* proper of two "books of Jeû" "which Enoch wrote when the First Mystery spoke with him out of the Tree of Life and the Tree of Knowledge in the Paradise of Adam" (p. 246, Copt.). In the first part of the Μέρος τευχῶν Σωτήρος, however Jeû is described as "the First Man, the ἐπίσκοπος of the Light, and the πρεσβευτής or Ambassador of the First Precept" (p. 322, Copt.); and it is further said in the same book that "the Book of Jeû (not books)

of the Light, and in his name we may possibly recognize a corruption of the Hebrew Yahweh. With him and of similar origin is Melchisedek<sup>1</sup>, the Inheritor, Receiver or Purifier of the Light, whose office it is to take the portions of light as they are redeemed into the Treasure-house<sup>2</sup>. Another emanation from the Five Trees is an otherwise unnamed Guard of the Veil of the Treasure-house<sup>3</sup> which seems to be the veil dividing the

which Enoch wrote in Paradise when I (Jesus) spoke with him out of the Tree of Life and the Tree of Knowledge" was placed by His means in "the rock Ararad." Jesus goes on to say that He placed "Kalapataurôth the ruler who is over Skemmut in which is the foot of Jeû, and he surrounds all rulers and destinies—I placed that ruler to guard the books of Jeû from the Flood and lest any of the rulers should destroy them out of envy" (p. 354, Copt.).

<sup>1</sup> Melchizidek is very seldom mentioned in the *Pistis Sophia*, but when he is, it is always as the great παραλήμπτωρ or "inheritor" of the Light (p. 34, Copt.). Jesus describes how he comes among the Rulers of the Aeons at certain times and takes away their light, which he purifies (p. 35, Copt.). He is said to have emanated from the light of the 5th Tree of the Treasure House, as Jeû did from that of the 1st (p. 193, Copt.). In the Μέρος τευχῶν Σωτήρος, he is called the great παραλημπτής or "receiver" of the Light (p. 292, Copt.). In the 2nd part of the last named document he is called Zorocothora Melchizidek, an epithet which C. W. King in *The Gnostics and their Remains* translates "light-gatherer." It is also said in the same 2nd part that "he and Jeû are the two great lights," and that he is the πρεσβευτής or "Legate" of all the lights which are purified in the Rulers of the Aeons (p. 365, Copt.). We may perhaps see in him and Jeû the antitypes of which the Great Light and the First Precept are the paradigms. Hippolytus, *op. cit.* Bk VII. c. 36, p. 391, Cruice, says that there was a sect, the followers of one Theodotus, a τραπεζίτης or money-changer, who said that there was "a greatest power named Melchizidek who was greater than Christ." Pseudo-Tertullian repeats the same story and adds that Melchizidek is "a celestial virtue of great grace," who does for heavenly angels and virtues what Christ does for men, having made himself "their intercessor and advocate." See *auct. cit.* (probably Victorinus of Pettau) *Against all Heresies*, c. XXIV. p. 279, Oehl. He doubtless founded his opinion on the passage in the Hebrews. The name seems to mean "Holy King" Cf. the "King of Glory" of the Manichaeans, see Chap. XIII *infra*.

<sup>2</sup> p. 35, Copt.

<sup>3</sup> He is said to have emanated from the 2nd Tree (p. 193, Copt.) and is nowhere distinctly named. But one may perhaps guess from the order in which he occurs in the 2nd part of the Μέρος τευχῶν Σωτήρος that

Treasure-house from the Place of the Right-hand, and there are two others of equal rank who are called simply the two Prohegumeni or Forerunners<sup>1</sup>. Below these again is the Great Sabaoth the Good, who supplied, as we have seen, the soul which was in Jesus at His birth, and who is himself the emanation, not of any of the Five Trees, but of Jeû<sup>2</sup>. He seems to have a substitute or messenger called the little Sabaoth the Good, who communicates directly with the powers of matter. In the Middle come the powers who are set over the reincarnation of souls and the consequent redemption of mankind. Of these, the only two named are "the Great Iao the Good<sup>3</sup>," spoken of in one passage as the Great Hegumen (or Leader) of the Middle<sup>4</sup>. He, too, has a minister called "the Little Iao" who supplies the "power" which, with the soul of Elijah, animated the body of John the Baptist<sup>5</sup>. He also has twelve deacons or ministers under him<sup>6</sup>. The other

his name was Zarazaz, evidently a cryptogram like those mentioned in n. 1, p. 139 *supra*. It is also said that the Rulers call him "Maskelli after the name of a strong (i.e. male) ruler of their own place (p. 370, Copt.)." This name of Maskelli, sometimes written Maskelli-maskellô, is frequently met with in the Magic Papyri. Cf. Wessely, *Ephesia Grammata*, p. 28.

<sup>1</sup> They are said to have emanated from the 3rd and 4th Tree respectively (p. 193, Copt.).

<sup>2</sup> p. 193, Copt. He is evidently called *the Good* because there is a wicked Sabaoth sometimes called Sabaoth Adamas, and the Great because there is a Little Sabaoth the Good who seems to act as his messenger. It is this last who takes the power from the Great Sabaoth the Good which afterwards becomes the body of Jesus and "casts it into matter and Barbelo" (p. 127, Copt.). He seems to be set over or in some way identified with what is called the Gate of Life (p. 215, Copt.) both in the *Pistis Sophia* and the *Mépos τευχῶν Σωτήρος* (p. 292, Copt.).

<sup>3</sup> p. 12, Copt., where he is oddly enough called the Little Iao the Good, I think by a clerical error. Later he is said to be "the great leader of the middle whom the Rulers call the Great Iao after the name of a great ruler in their own place" (p. 194, Copt.). He is described in the same way in the second part of the *Mépos τευχῶν Σωτήρος* (p. 371, Copt.).

<sup>4</sup> See last note.

<sup>5</sup> p. 12, Copt. This "power" is evidently the better part of man's soul like the Logoi who dwell therein in the passage quoted above from Valentinus, see Chap. IX, p. 112 *supra*.

<sup>6</sup> p. 194, Copt.

great Leader of the Middle is the Virgin of Light<sup>1</sup>. She it is who chooses the bodies into which the souls of men shall be put at conception, in discharge of which duty she sends the soul of Elijah into the body of John the Baptist, her colleague Iao's share in the work being apparently limited to providing the "power" accompanying it. She has among her assistants seven other virgins of light<sup>2</sup>, after whose likeness Mary the Mother of Jesus and Mary Magdalene are said to have been made, and we also read of "receivers" who are under her orders<sup>3</sup>. The light of the Sun "in its true shape" is said to be in her place<sup>4</sup>, and there is some reason for thinking that she is to be considered as the power which directs the material Sun, while her colleague Iao has the same office as regards the Moon<sup>5</sup>.

We now come to the places of the left, the highest of which seems to be that which is called the Thirteenth Aeon. This is a part of the universe the existence of which Jesus conceals from His disciples until He receives his "vestures," and there is much mystery as to its origin. It seems to have been governed in the first instance by a triad consisting of an unnamed power referred to as the Great Forefather or the Great Unseen One, a female power called Barbelo<sup>6</sup>, and a second

<sup>1</sup> See n. 3, p. 137 *supra*.

<sup>2</sup> So the *Μέρος τευχῶν Σωτήρος* (p. 327, Copt.).

<sup>3</sup> The likeness of Mary the Mother and Mary Magdalene to the seven Virgins appears in the translation of Amélineau (*Pistis Sophia*, Paris, 1895, p. 60). Schwartz (p. 75, Lat.) puts it rather differently. See also Schmidt, *K.-G.S.* bd. 1, p. 75. The "receivers" of the Virgin of Light are mentioned on p. 292, Copt.

<sup>4</sup> p. 184, Copt.

<sup>5</sup> pp. 340, 341, Copt. As *ioz* (*ioh*) is Coptic for the Moon, it is just possible that there may be a kind of pun here on this word and the name Iao. Osiris, whose name was often equated by the Alexandrian Jews with their own divine name Jaho or Jah, as in the Manethonian story of Osarsiph=Joseph, was also considered a Moon-god. Cf. the "Hymn of the Mysteries" given in Chap. VIII, where he is called "the holy horned moon of heaven."

<sup>6</sup> See note 1, p. 138 *supra*. The Bruce Papyrus (Amélineau, *Notice sur le Papyrus Gnostique Bruce*, Paris, 1882, p. 220) speaks of the "Thirteenth Aeon, where are the Great Unseen God and the Great Virgin of the Spirit (cf. the *παρθενική πνεῦμα* of Irenaeus) and the twenty-four emanations of the unseen God."

male called the Authades or Proud God<sup>1</sup> who plays a principal part in the episode of Pistis Sophia which forms the ostensible theme of the book. Of the Great Forefather, we are told nothing of importance, but what is said of the female power Barbelo bears out fully the remark which Hippolytus attributes to Valentinus that among the lesser powers or aeons the female merely projects the substance, while it is the male which gives form to it<sup>2</sup>. It is doubtless for this reason that it is from her that the body of Jesus is said to have come—*i.e.* that she provided the matter out of which it was formed in the first instance, and which had, as He says later in the present book, to be purged and cleansed by Himself<sup>3</sup>. She is also spoken of throughout as the origin of all the matter within the world of sense<sup>4</sup>. This triad, constantly referred to throughout the book as the Three Tridynami or Triple Powers, have put forth, before the story opens, twenty-four other powers arranged in twelve syzygies or pairs who are spoken of as the Twenty-four Unseen Ones, and who inhabit with them the Thirteenth Aeon. Only one of these is named and this is the inferior or female member of the last syzygy. She is named Pistis Sophia, and gives, as we have seen, her name to the book<sup>5</sup>.

We now pass from the unseen world, which can nevertheless be comprehended as being in part at least material, to the starry world above us which is plainly within the reach

<sup>1</sup> See n. 2, p. 142 *supra*.

<sup>2</sup> See Chapter IX, p. 104 *supra*.

<sup>3</sup> p. 116, Copt.

<sup>4</sup> I suppose it is in view of this maternal aspect of her nature that she is alluded to in the latter part of the *Μέρος τευχῶν Σωτήρος* as *Βαρβηλω βδελλη* "Barbello who gives suck"? Her place, according to the Bruce Papyrus (Amélineau, p. 218), is said to be in the Twelfth Aeon.

<sup>5</sup> There have been many attempts to make this name mean something else than merely "Faith-Wisdom." Dulaurier and Renan both tried to read it "*πιστή Σοφία*" "the faithful Wisdom" or "La fidèle Sagesse." If we had more documents of the style of Simon's *Apophysis*, we should probably find that this apposition of two or more nouns in a name was not infrequent, and the case of Ptah-Sokar-Osiris will occur to every Egyptologist. The fact that the name includes the first and last female member of the Dodecad of Valentinus (see p. 101 *supra*) is really its most plausible explanation.

of our organs of sense. The controlling part in this is taken by the powers called the Twelve Aeons, who are ruled before the advent of Jesus by a power called, like the Supreme Being in the Ophite system, Adamas<sup>1</sup>. As they are called in one passage the 12 hours of the day, it may be concluded that they are the 12 zodiacal signs or, in other words, the Zodiac or 12 constellations of fixed stars through which the sun appears to pass in his yearly course<sup>2</sup>. Although nowhere expressly stated, it may be concluded that they emanated from the last member of the triad of the Left, *i.e.* the Authades, who is here said to have been disobedient in refusing "to give up the purity

<sup>1</sup> This Adamas seems to be an essentially evil power, who wages useless war against the Light on the entry of Jesus into his realm (p. 25, Copt.). His seat is plainly the Twelve Aeons or Zodiac (p. 157, Copt.), and it is said in the Μέρος τευχῶν Σωήρος that his "kingdom" is in the τοποὶ κεφαλῆς αἰώνων or Places of the head of the Aeons and is opposite the place of the Virgin of Light (p. 336, Copt.). In the second part of the same document (*i.e.* the μ. τ. σ.) it is said that the rulers of Adamas rebelled, persisting in the act of copulation (συνουσία) and begetting "Rulers and Archangels and Angels and Ministers (λείτουργοί) and Decans" (Δεκανοί), and that thereupon Jeû went forth from the Place of the Right and "bound them in Heimarmene and the Sphere." We further learn that half the Aeons headed by Jabraoth, who is also once mentioned in the *Pistis Sophia* proper (p. 128, Copt., and again in the Bruce Papyrus, Amélineau, p. 239), were consequently transferred to another place, while Adamas, now for the first time called Sabaoth Adamas, with the unrepentant rulers are confined in the Sphere to the number of 1800, over whom 360 other rulers bear sway, over whom again are set the five planets Saturn, Mars, Mercury, Venus, and Jupiter (pp. 360, 361, Copt.). All this seems to me to be later than the *Pistis Sophia* proper, to have been written at a time when belief in astrology was more rife than in Hadrian's reign, and to owe something to Manichaeian influence. The original Adamas, the persecutor of Pistis Sophia herself, seems identifiable with the Diabolos or Cosmocrator of Valentinus, in which case we may perhaps see in the "Great Propator" a merely stupid and ignorant power like the Jaldabaoth of the Ophites and their successors. See p. 163 *infra*.

<sup>2</sup> p. 145, Copt. So Irenaeus in his account of the Valentinian doctrines, Bk I. c. 1, p. 12 *sqq.* I suppose there is an allusion to this in the remark of Jesus to Mary that a year is as a day (p. 243, Copt.). But all the astrology of the time seems to have divided the astronomical day not into 24, but into 12 hours. It was the same with the Manichaeans. See Chavannes and Pelliot, "Un Traité manichéen retrouvé en Chine," *Journal Asiatique*, série x, t. XVIII. (Nov.-Dec. 1911), p. 540, n. 4.



of his light," no doubt when the earth was made, and is accused of ambition in wishing to rule the Thirteenth Aeon. Through his creature, Adamas their king, he induces the rulers of the Twelve Aeons to delay the redemption of the light from matter. It is from their matter that are made the souls, not only of men, but of beasts, birds, and reptiles<sup>1</sup>, and if they were allowed to do as they pleased, the process would go on for ever, as it is the habit of these Archons "to turn about and devour their own *ejecta*, the breath of their mouths, the tears of their eyes, and the sweat of their bodies," so that the same matter is used over and over again<sup>2</sup>. Below the starry world comes the Sphere of Heimarmene or Destiny, so called apparently because both the earthly and heavenly lot of each soul is determined on its downward passage through it, and below that again the Sphere simply so called, which is the visible firmament apparently stretched above us. The Archons of the Aeons, of whom Adamas is the chief, rule their own and both these lower spheres, and the only hindrance to their dilatory manoeuvres prior to the advent of Jesus was caused by Melchizidek the Receiver of the Light<sup>3</sup>, who came among them at stated times, took away their light, and, after having purified it, stored it up in the Treasure-house. This was

<sup>1</sup> But curiously enough, not the "souls" of fish. So in the Middle Ages, the Manichaeans of Languedoc did not allow their "Perfects" to partake of animal food nor even of eggs, but allowed them fish, because they said these creatures were not begotten by copulation. See Schmidt, *Hist. des Cathares*, Paris, 1843. Is this one of the reasons why Jesus is called ἰχθύς?

<sup>2</sup> This idea of man being made from the tears of the eyes of the heavenly powers is an old one in Egypt. So Maspero explains the well-known sign of the *utchat* or Eye of Horus as that "qui exprime la matière, le corps du soleil, d'où tous les êtres découlent sous forme de pleurs," "*Les Hypogées Royaux de Thèbes*," *Ét. Égyptol.* II. p. 130. Moret, "*Le verbe créateur et révélateur en Égypte*," *R. H. R.* Mai-Juin, 1909, p. 386, gives many instances from hymns and other ritual documents. It was known to Proclus who transfers it after his manner to Orpheus and makes it into hexameters:

Thy tears are the much-enduring race of men,

By thy laugh thou hast raised up the sacred race of gods.

See Abel's *Orphica*, fr. 236.

<sup>3</sup> See n. 1, p. 148 *supra*.

apparently done through the medium of the sun and moon, who seem to have acted in the matter as the "receivers" of Melchizidek<sup>1</sup>.

We can now resume the narrative of the book which has been interrupted in order that a description of the universe through which Jesus passes on His ascension might be given. He tells His disciples that clothing Himself in His third or least glorious "vesture," He flew up to the firmament, the gates of which opened spontaneously to give Him passage<sup>2</sup>. Entering in, the Archons there were all struck with terror at the light of His vesture, and wondered how the "Lord of the Universe"<sup>3</sup> passed through them unnoticed on his descent to earth<sup>4</sup>. The same scenes are repeated when He enters the Sphere of Destiny, and again when He reaches the Twelve Aeons or Zodiac of fixed stars. Before leaving the Twelve Aeons, Jesus takes away from its rulers a third part of their power, and alters their course, so that its direction is changed every six months. This He does, as He tells His disciples, for a double reason. He thereby prevents the Aeons from devouring their own matter, and so delaying the redemption of the light, and He further hinders their movements from being used by mankind in the divination and magic which the sinning angels taught when "they came down"—a clear reference to the story in Genesis of the fall of the angels as amplified in the *Book of Enoch*. This alteration, He declares,

<sup>1</sup> This is, perhaps, to be gathered from the *Pistis Sophia*, p. 36, Copt. Cf. Μέρος τευχῶν Σωτήριος, pp. 337-338. In another part of the last-named document, the Moon-ship is described as steered by a male and female dragon (the caduceus of Hermes ?) who snatch away the light of the Rulers (p. 360, Copt.).

<sup>2</sup> This seems to be the passage referred to later by Origen. See n. 2, p. 159 *infra*.

<sup>3</sup> The usual epithet or appellation of Osiris *Neb-er-tcher*=Lord of Totality or the Universe. Cf. Budge, *Book of the Dead*, *passim*.

<sup>4</sup> So in the *Ascensio Isaiae*, of which Mr Charles says that "we cannot be sure that it existed earlier than the latter half of the 2nd century of our Era," it is said (Chap. IX, v. 15) "And thus His descent, as you will see, will be hidden even from the heavens, so that it will not be known who He is." Charles, *The Ascension of Isaiah*, p. 62. Cf. *ibid.* pp. 67, 70, 73 and 79.

was foreshadowed by the text "I have shortened the times for my elect's sake<sup>1</sup>."

Passing upward to the Thirteenth Aeon, Jesus tells His disciples that he found Pistis Sophia dwelling alone in a place immediately below it, and He here makes a long digression to recount her history. She is, as has been said above, one of the twenty-four invisible but material emanations projected by the Great Unseen Forefather and his consort Barbelo, and formerly dwelt with her own partner, whose name is not mentioned, in the Thirteenth Aeon<sup>2</sup>. But one day happening to look forth from her place and beholding the light of the Treasure-house, she longed to ascend towards it and began to sing praises to it. This angered exceedingly the Authades or Proud God, the Third Triple Power or chief of the Thirteenth Aeon, who had already, as has been said, shown his disobedience in refusing to give up his light. Out of envy and jealousy of Pistis Sophia, he sends forth from himself a great power with a lion's face who is "half flame and half darkness" and bears the name of Jaldabaoth, which we have met with before among the Ophites<sup>3</sup>. This Jaldabaoth is sent below into the regions of Chaos, the unformed and shapeless darkness which is either below or surrounds the earth<sup>4</sup>, and when Pistis Sophia sees him shining

<sup>1</sup> pp. 39, 40, Copt. The reference is apparently to the Book of Enoch, c. LXXX. (see Charles, *Book of Enoch*, pp. 212, 213, and the *Epistle of Barnabas*, N.T. extra can., c. iv. p. 9, Hilgenfeld). In the Latin version of the last-quoted book, it is assigned to Daniel, which shows perhaps the connection of Enoch with all this quasi-prophetic or apocalyptic literature.

<sup>2</sup> According to the Valentinian system, his name was Θελητός or "the Beloved." See Chap. IX, p. 101 *supra*.

<sup>3</sup> See Chap. VIII *supra*. Here he occupies a far inferior position to that assigned him by the Ophites. In the Μέρος τευχῶν Σωτήρος he sinks lower still and becomes merely one of the torturers in hell (p. 382, Copt., κ.τ.λ.). Thus, as is usual in matters of religion, the gods of one age become the fiends of the next. In the Bruce Papyrus (Amélineau, p. 212) he appears as one of the chiefs of the Third Aeon. It is curious, however, to observe how familiar the name must have been to what Origen calls "a certain secret theology," so that it was necessary to give him *some* place in every system of Gnosticism. His bipartite appearance may be taken from Ezekiel viii. 2.

<sup>4</sup> Probably the latter. See what is said about the Outer Darkness in the Μέρος τευχῶν Σωτήρος, p. 319, Copt. where it is described as "a great

there, she mistakes his light for the light of the Treasure-house, and, leaving her consort, plunges downwards towards it. She is instantly seized by Jaldabaoth and other wicked powers sent forth by the Proud God, and grievously tormented with the object of taking from her her light, so that she may never again be able to return to her own place. In this plight, she sings several Metanoiae or hymns of penitence to the light, and after seven of these, Jesus, as He says, "from pity and without commandment," raises her to the uppermost parts of Chaos where she is slightly more at ease<sup>1</sup>. She continues here to sing hymns of penitence, but is tormented afresh until, after her ninth repentance, Jesus receives command from the First Mystery to succour her. This he does in a battle with fresh emanations from the Authades, including one in the shape of "a flying arrow<sup>2</sup>." Adamas, the king of the wicked Eons, also sends a power to the assistance of Jaldabaoth, and the other emanations of the Proud God turn into serpents, a basilisk with seven heads, and a dragon<sup>3</sup>. The powers of light sent by Jesus, however, defeat all her enemies, and the archangels Gabriel and Michael bear her aloft and establish her in the place below the Thirteenth Aeon, where Jesus finds her on His ascension as here recorded. But this is not the end. Jesus tells her that when "three times" are fulfilled<sup>4</sup>, she dragon whose tail is in his mouth who is without the whole κόσμος and surrounds it."

<sup>1</sup> p. 83, Copt. So in the Manichaean legend, the First Man, on being taken captive by Satan, prays seven times to the Light and is delivered from the Darkness in which he is imprisoned. See Chap. XIII *infra*.

<sup>2</sup> This demon in the shape of a flying arrow seems to be well known in Rabbinic lore. Mr Whinfield in *J.R.A.S.*, April, 1910, pp. 485, 486, describes him as having a head like a calf, with one horn rising out of his forehead like a cruse or pitcher, while to look upon him is certain death to man or beast. His authority seems to be Rapaport's *Tales from the Midrash*.

<sup>3</sup> The basilisk with seven heads seems to be Death. See Gaster, "The Apocalypse of Abraham," *T.S.B.A.* vol. ix. pt 1, p. 222, where this is said to be the "true shape" of death. Cf. Kohler, "Pre-Talmudic Haggadah," *J.Q.R.*, 1895, p. 590. Death, as we have seen in Chap. IX, p. 107, was in the ideas of Valentinus the creature of the Demiurge. For the dragon, see Whinfield, *ubi cit.*

<sup>4</sup> These "three times" are not years. As the *Pistis Sophia* opens with the announcement that Jesus spent 12 years on earth after the Resurrection,

will be tormented again. This happens as predicted immediately before the descent of the "vesture" on Him on the Mount of Olives. Thereupon, He delivers her for the last time and restores her to her place in the 13th Aeon, where she sings to him a final hymn of thanksgiving.

This completes the episode of Pistis Sophia, and the rest of the book is filled with the questionings upon it of Mary Magdalene and the other disciples, among whom are prominent Mary the Mother of Jesus, Salome, Martha, St John the Divine, St Philip, St Thomas, and St Matthew, to which last-named three is said to be entrusted the recording of the words of Jesus, together with St Peter, St James and St Andrew. This has led some commentators to think that the work may possibly be the *Interrogations of Mary* (Ἐρωτήσεις Μαρίας), concerning which Epiphanius says that two versions, a greater and a lesser, were used by several Gnostic sects<sup>1</sup>. These questionings and the answers of Jesus are extremely tedious, and include the comparison of the hymns of Pistis Sophia, fourteen in all, with certain named Psalms and Odes of David and Solomon of which they are said to be the "interpretation<sup>2</sup>." In the course of this, however, the purpose of the book is disclosed,

we may suppose that He was then—if the author accepted the traditional view that He suffered at 33—exactly 45 years old, and the "time" would then be a period of 15 years, as was probably the indiction. The descent of the "two vestures" upon Jesus is said (p. 4, Copt.) to have taken place "on the 15th day of the month Tybi" which is the day Clement of Alexandria (*Strom.* Bk I. c. 21) gives for the birth of Jesus. He says the followers of Basilides gave the same day as that of His baptism.

<sup>1</sup> Epiphanius, *Haer.* xxvi. t. II. pt 1, p. 181, Oehler.

<sup>2</sup> This doctrine of ἐρμηνεία occurs all through the book. The author is trying to make out that well-known passages of both the Old and New Testaments were in fact prophetic utterances showing forth in advance the marvels he narrates. While the Psalms of David quoted by him are Canonical, the Odes of Solomon are the Apocrypha known under that name and quoted by Lactantius (*Div. Inst.* Bk IV. c. 12). For some time the *Pistis Sophia* was the only authority for their contents, but in 1909 Dr Rendel Harris found nearly the whole collection in a Syriac MS. of the 16th century. A translation has since been published in *Cambridge Texts and Studies*, vol. VIII. No. 3, Cambridge, 1912, by the Bishop of Ossory, who shows, as it seems conclusively, that they were the hymns sung by the newly-baptized in the Primitive Church.

and appears as the revelation of the glories awaiting the believer in the world to come, the coming of the Millennium, and the announcement that Jesus has brought the "mysteries" to the earth for the salvation of men. But before describing these, it may be as well to draw attention to the manifest likeness between the theology and cosmology of the *Pistis Sophia* proper and what has been said above of the tenets of the Ophites and of Valentinus.

At first sight, the *Pistis Sophia* in this respect seems to be almost entirely an Ophite book. The Ineffable One, as has been said, is not to be distinguished from the Ophite Bythos, while "the First Mystery looking inward and outward" is a fairly close parallel to the First Man and the Son of Man of the Ophite system. The names Sabaoth, Iao, and Jaldabaoth also appear both here and with the Ophites, although the last-named power now occupies a greatly inferior position to that assigned to him by them, and from a merely ignorant power has now become an actively malignant one. The work assigned to Sophia Without in the older system is here taken in the Place of the Middle by the Virgin of Light, who is throughout the working agent in the salvation of mankind; but it should be noted that she here operates directly and not through a grosser power as with the Ophites. The idea of a female divinity ordering the affairs of men for their good as a mother with her children had already gained possession of the heathen world in the character of (the Greek) Isis, and in the hint here given as to the resemblance between her delegates and the Virgin Mary, we may see, perhaps, the road by which the Christian world travelled towards that conception of the Theotokos or Mother of God which played such an important part in its later creed. Among the powers inferior to her the names and places are changed, but the general arrangement remains nearly the same as with the Ophites, especially the Ophites of the diagram. The starry world in particular here comes much into evidence, and is given more important functions than in any other Gnostic system except the Ophite<sup>1</sup>. The "Gates" of the firmaments are met

<sup>1</sup> Astrological doctrine first becomes prominent in Gnostic teaching

with both here and in the Ophite prayers or "defences" recorded by Origen<sup>1</sup>, and an allusion put by this last into the mouth of Celsus and not otherwise explained, to "gates that open of their own accord," looks as if Origen's heathen adversary may himself have come across the story of the *Pistis Sophia*<sup>2</sup>. The general hostility of this starry world and its rulers towards mankind is a leading feature in both systems.

On the other hand, the parallels between the theology of the *Pistis Sophia* and that of Valentinus are even closer, and are too important to be merely accidental. The complete identification of Jesus with the First Mystery strongly recalls the statement of Valentinus, rather slurred over by the Fathers, that Jesus was Himself the Joint Fruit or summary of the perfections of the whole Pleroma or Godhead, and is a much more Christian conception than that of the earlier Ophites as to His nature<sup>3</sup>. So, too, the curious theory that each of in the *Excerpta Theodoti* which we owe to Clement of Alexandria. We may therefore put their date about the year 200. This would be after the time of Valentinus himself, but agrees well with what M. Cumont (*Astrology and Religion*, pp. 96 sqq.) says as to the great vogue which astrology attained in Rome under the Severi. Its intrusion into the Valentinian doctrines is much more marked in the *Mépos τευχῶν Σωτήρος* than in the *Pistis Sophia*, and more in the Bruce Papyrus than in either.

<sup>1</sup> See Chap. VIII, pp. 73, 74 *supra*.

<sup>2</sup> Origen, *cont. Cels.* Bk VI. c. 34.

<sup>3</sup> Hippolytus (Chap. IX, p. 92), speaks of the Jesus of Valentinus as the Joint Fruit of the Pleroma simply. Irenaeus (Bk I. c. I, p. 23, Harvey) goes into more detail: Καὶ ὑπὲρ τῆς εὐποιᾶς ταύτης βουλῇ μιᾷ καὶ γνώμῃ τὸ πᾶν Πλήρωμα τῶν Αἰώνων, συνευδοκούντος τοῦ Χριστοῦ καὶ τοῦ Πνεύματος, τοῦ δὲ Πατρὸς αὐτῶν συνεπισφραγιζόμενον, ἕνα ἕκαστον τῶν Αἰώνων, ὅπερ εἶχεν ἐν ἑαυτῷ κάλλιστον καὶ ἀνθηρότατον συνενεγκαμένους καὶ ἐρανισμένους, καὶ ταῦτα ἀρμοδίως πλέξαντας, καὶ ἐμμελῶς ἐνώσαντας, προβαλέσθαι προβλήματα εἰς τιμὴν καὶ δόξαν τοῦ Βυθοῦ, τελειότατον κάλλος τε καὶ ἄστρον τοῦ Πληρώματος, τέλειον καρπὸν τὸν Ἰησοῦν ὃν καὶ Σωτῆρα προσαγορευθῆναι, καὶ Χριστὸν, καὶ Λόγον πατρωνομικῶς καὶ κατὰ [καὶ τὰ] Πάντα, διὰ τὸ ἀπὸ πάντων εἶναι. "And because of this benefit, with one will and opinion, the whole Pleroma of the Aeons, with the consent of Christos and the Spirit, and their Father having set his seal upon the motion, brought together and combined what each of them had in him which was most beautiful and brightest, and wreathing these fittingly together and properly uniting them, they projected a projection to the honour and glory of Bythos, the most perfect beauty and star of the Pleroma, the perfect Fruit Jesus, who is also called Saviour

the lower worlds has its own "saviour" finds expression in both systems, as does the idea that Jesus received something from all the worlds through which He passed on His way to earth. One may even find a vivid reminiscence of the Valentinian nomenclature in the name of Pistis Sophia herself, which combines the names of the feminine members of the first and last syzygies of the Valentinian Dodecad<sup>1</sup>, Pistis there being the spouse of Paracletus or the Legate, and Sophia that of Theletus or the Beloved, while the cause of her fall in the present book is the same as that assigned in the system of Valentinus. Hence it may appear that the author of the *Pistis Sophia*, whoever he may have been, was well acquainted with the Ophite and Valentinian theology, and that he continued it with modifications of his own after the innovating habit current among the Gnostics and noticed by Tertullian.

In the cosmology of the *Pistis Sophia*, again, the preference given to Valentinian rather than to the older Ophitic views is clearly marked. The cause of the descent of the light into

and Christ, and after his Father Logos, and Pan, because He is from all." Compare with these the words of Colossians ii. 9: *ὅτι ἐν αὐτῷ κατοικεῖ πᾶν τὸ πλήρωμα τῆς θεότητος σωματικῶς*. "For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily."

<sup>1</sup> That the Valentinians considered the Dodecad (and *a fortiori* the Decad) as having a collective entity, and as it were a corporate existence, seems plain from what Hippolytus says in narrating the opinions of Marcus: *ταῦτα γὰρ δώδεκα ζώδια φανερώτατα τὴν τοῦ Ἀνθρώπου καὶ τῆς Ἐκκλησίας θυγατέρα δωδεκάδα ἀποσκιάζειν λέγουσι*. "For they say that these 12 signs of the Zodiac most clearly shadow forth the Dodecad who is the daughter of Anthropos and Ecclesia" (Hipp. *op. cit.* Bk VI. c. 54, p. 329, Cruice). And again (*loc. cit.* p. 331, Cruice): *ἔτι μὴν καὶ τὴν γῆν εἰς δώδεκα κλίματα διηρῆσθαι φάσκοντες, καὶ καθ' ἓν ἕκαστον κλίμα, ἀνὰ μίαν δύναμιν ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανῶν κατὰ κάθετον ὑποδεχομένην, καὶ ὁμοούσια τίκτουσαν τέκνα τῇ καταπεμπούσῃ κατὰ τὴν ἀπόρροιαν δυνάμει, τύπον εἶναι τῆς ἄνω δωδεκάδος*. "These are also they who assert that the earth is divided into twelve climates, and receives in each climate one special power from the heavens and produces children resembling the power thus sent down by emanation, being thus a type of the Dodecad above." The doctrine of correspondences or, as it was called in the Middle Ages, of "signatures" is here most clearly stated. In all this the Valentinian teaching was doubtless under the influence of the ancient Egyptian ideas as to the *paut neteru* or "company of the gods," as to which see Maspero's essay *Sur L'Ennéade* quoted above.



matter in the first instance is no accident as with the Ophites, but is part of the large scheme for the evolution or, as the author calls it, the "emanation" of the universe which was devised and watched over in its smallest details by the First Mystery<sup>1</sup>. Whether the author accepted the wild story attributed to Valentinus by Irenaeus concerning the Fall of Sophia and her Ectroma, it is impossible to say, because, as we have seen, he omits all detailed description of the way in which the two higher worlds which we have called the heavens of the Ineffable One and the world of the First Mystery came into being<sup>2</sup>. But it is plain that both must have been made by or rather through Jesus, because it is stated in the mysterious five words written on the vesture of Jesus that it is through the First Mystery that all things exist, and that it was from him that all the emanations flowed forth<sup>3</sup>. As the *Pistis Sophia* also says that Jesus is Himself the First Mystery, this corresponds to the opening words of St John's Gospel, that "by Him all things were made<sup>4</sup>." Hence the author of

<sup>1</sup> It is said (p. 9, Copt.) that it is by him that the universe was created and that it is he who causes the sun to rise.

<sup>2</sup> As has before been said, this is attempted in one of the documents of the Bruce Papyrus. See pp. 191, 192 *infra*. In the present state of the text this attempt is only difficultly intelligible, and is doubtless both later in date than and the work of an author inferior to that of the *Pistis Sophia*.

<sup>3</sup> p. 16, Copt. Yet the First Mystery is not the creator of Matter which is evil, because Matter does not really exist. See Bruce Papyrus (Amélineau, p. 126) and n. 2, p. 190 *infra*.

<sup>4</sup> As mentioned in the *Scottish Review* article referred to in n. 1, p. 135 *supra*, there is no passage but one in the *Pistis Sophia* which affords any colour for supposing that the author was acquainted with St John's Gospel. All the quotations set forth by Harnack in his treatise *Über das gnostische Buch Pistis-Sophia*, Leipzig, 1891, p. 27, on which he relies to prove the converse of this proposition, turn out on analysis to appear also in one or other of the Synoptics, from which the author may well have taken them. The single exception is this (*Pistis Sophia*, p. 11, Copt.), "Wherefore I said unto you from the beginning, Ye are not from the Cosmos; I likewise am not from it"; John xvii. 14: "(O Father) I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." The parallel does not seem so close as to make it certain that one document is copying from the other. Both may very possibly be taken from some collection of Logia now lost, but at one

the *Pistis Sophia*, if confronted with the story of the Ectroma, would doubtless have replied that this was merely a myth designed to teach the danger for the uninstructed of acting on one's own initiative instead of waiting for the commands of God, and that in his book he had told the same story in a slightly different way. This seems to be the only construction to be placed on the trials of Pistis Sophia herself, since her desire for light seems not to have been looked upon as in itself sinful, and the real cause of her downfall was the mistaking the light of Jaldabaoth for that of the Treasure-house. But her descent into Chaos, unlike the Fall of her prototype, apparently had nothing to do with the creation of the universe and its inhabitants, which in the *Pistis Sophia* seems to have taken place before the story opens. If they were supposed by the author to have originated in the passions of Sophia Without, as Hippolytus tells us Valentinus taught<sup>1</sup>, they were none the less the direct work of Jesus, and the statement in Hippolytus, that in the Valentinian teaching Jesus made out of the supplication of Sophia Without a path of repentance, finds a sort of echo in the *Pistis Sophia*, where it is the "Metanoiae" or hymns of penitence many times repeated of Pistis Sophia, her antitype or copy, which bring Jesus to her succour. A further parallel may be found in Hippolytus' other statement from Valentinus that Jesus gave this "supplication" power over the psychic substance which is called the Demiurge<sup>2</sup>. In the *Pistis Sophia*, the heroine defeats the Authades with the assistance of Jesus; and there does not seem much doubt that Pistis Sophia is eventually to receive her adversary the Authades' place, an event which is foreshadowed by the quotation of the text "His bishopric let another take" in one of her penitential psalms<sup>3</sup>. It would

time current in Alexandrian circles; or from the *Gospel of the Egyptians*, from which the *Pistis Sophia* afterwards quotes.

<sup>1</sup> See Chap. IX, p. 107 *supra*.

<sup>2</sup> See last note. The *Authades* or Proud God of the *Pistis Sophia* seems to have all the characteristics with which Valentinus endows his Demiurge.

<sup>3</sup> So Pistis Sophia sings in her second hymn of praise after her deliverance from Chaos (p. 160, Copt.) "I am become pure light," which she certainly was not before that event. Jesus also promises her later (p. 168, Copt.)

also appear that Adamas, the wicked king of the Twelve Aeons, may be the Adversary or Diabolos described by the Valentinians<sup>1</sup> as the cosmocrator or ruler of this world, his rule being exercised in the *Pistis Sophia* through his servants, the Archons of "Heimarmene and the Sphere." The epithet of Adamas or ἀδάμαστος given in classical literature to Hades as the Lord of Hell would seem appropriate enough in his case. This would only leave Beelzebub, prince of the demons, unaccounted for; but the author does not here give any detailed description of Chaos which may be supposed to be his seat. Although the omission was, as we shall see, amply repaired in other documents put forth by the sect, it may be here explained by the conviction of the nearness of the Parusia or Second Advent which marks the *Pistis Sophia*<sup>2</sup>. On the fulfilment of this hope, the Cosmos was, as we are informed, to be "caught up," and all matter to be destroyed<sup>3</sup>. What need then to elaborate the description of its most malignant ministers?

The joys of the elect in the world to come, on the contrary, receive the fullest treatment. In the "completion of the Aeon, when the number of the assembly of perfect souls is made that when the three times are fulfilled and the *Authades* is again wroth with her and tries to stir up Jaldabaoth and Adamas against her "I will take away their powers from them and give them to thee." That this promise was supposed to be fulfilled seems evident from the low positions which Jaldabaoth and Adamas occupy in the Μέρος τευχῶν Σωτήριος, while Pistis Sophia is said to furnish the "power" for the planet Venus.

<sup>1</sup> See Chap. IX, p. 108 and n. 1 *supra*.

<sup>2</sup> All the revelations in the *Pistis Sophia* are in fact made in anticipation of the time "when the universe shall be caught up," and the disciples be set to reign with Jesus in the Last Parastates. Cf. especially pp. 193-206 Copt.

<sup>3</sup> The idea may not have been peculiar to Valentinus and his followers. So in the *Ascensio Isaiae* (x. 8-13) the "Most High the Father of my Lord" says to "my Lord Christ who will be called Jesus": "And none of the angels of that world shall know that thou art Lord with Me of the seven heavens and of their angels. And they shall not know that Thou art with Me till with a loud voice I have called to the heavens, and their angels, and their lights, even unto the sixth heaven, in order that you may judge and destroy the princes and angels and gods of that world, and the world that is dominated by them." Charles, *Ascension of Isaiah*, pp. 70-71.

up<sup>1</sup>," or in other words when all pneumatic or spiritual men have laid aside their material bodies, they will ascend through all the firmaments and places of the lesser powers until they come to the last Parastates, where they are to reign with Jesus over all the worlds below it<sup>2</sup>. This is the place from which the power, which the Great Light, the legate of the Ineffable One, took from the First Precept and passed into the Kerasmos or Confusion, originated; and it was this world, or rather its ruler, who arranged Jeû and the other Powers of the Right Hand in their Places and thus set going the whole machinery of salvation. Its "light" or glory is said to be so tremendous that it can be compared to nothing in this world, and here Jesus will reign with the disciples for 1000 "years of light" which are equal to 365,000 of our years<sup>3</sup>. Here the thrones of the twelve "disciples" (μαθηταί) will depend on His<sup>4</sup>, "but Mary Magdalene and John the Virgin shall be higher than all the disciples<sup>5</sup>." In the midst of these beatitudes they will apparently receive further instruction or further mysteries, the effect of which will be that they will at the conclusion of the Millennium be united with Jesus in so close a union that, as it is expressly said, they will become one with Him, and finally they will become members of the Godhead and, as it were, "the last limb of the Ineffable One<sup>6</sup>." In the meantime they will be at liberty to visit any of the worlds below them. All those who have received lesser mysteries,—that is to say, who have received a lesser degree of instruction and have not become wholly pneumatic or

<sup>1</sup> p. 194, Copt.

<sup>2</sup> p. 230, Copt.

<sup>3</sup> On the belief in the Millennium in the primitive Church, see Döllinger, *First Age of Christianity and the Church*, Eng. ed. 1906, pp. 119, 123 and 268 and Ffoulkes, s.v. Chiliasts, in *Dict. Christian Biog.*

<sup>4</sup> p. 230, Copt. Cf. Luke xxii. 29, 30.

<sup>5</sup> p. 231, Copt. "disciples" not apostles. So the Manichaeans made Manes to be attended by twelve disciples. See Chap. XIII *infra*.

<sup>6</sup> So Jesus says (p. 230, Copt.) of "the man who receives and accomplishes the Mystery of the Ineffable One"; "he is a man in the Cosmos, but he will reign with me in my kingdom; he is a man in the Cosmos, but he is a king in the light; he is a man in the Cosmos, but he is not of the Cosmos, and verily I say unto you, that man is I, and I am that man."

spiritual—will after death in this world go to the heaven of which they have received the mystery, or, in cases where their instruction has only just begun, be brought before the Virgin of Light, who will cause their souls to be sent back to earth in “righteous” bodies, which will of themselves seek after the mysteries, and, having obtained them, will, if time be allowed, achieve a more or less perfect salvation. Here, again, we meet with a close resemblance to the system of those later Ophites who possessed the diagram described by Origen; for Jesus tells His disciples that those who have only taken these lower mysteries will have to exhibit a seal or token (σύμβολον) and to make an “announcement” (ἀπόφασις) and a defence (ἀπολογία) in the different regions through which they pass after death<sup>1</sup>. No such requirements, He says, will be made from those who have received the higher mysteries, whose souls on leaving the body will become great streams of light, which will pass through all the lower places “during the time that a man can shoot an arrow,” the powers therein falling back terror-stricken from its light until the soul arrives at its appointed place. As, therefore, these seals and announcements and defences will be of no use to the disciples, the Jesus of the *Pistis Sophia* declares that He will not describe them in detail, they having been already set out in “the two great Books of Jeû<sup>2</sup>.”

What now are these “mysteries” which have so tremendous an effect on their recipient as actually to unite him with the Deity after death? The Greek word *μυστήριον*, which is that used in the Coptic MS., does not seem to mean etymologically more than *a secret*, in which sense it was applied to the ceremonies or secret dramas exhibited, as has been said, at Eleusis and elsewhere, and later, to the Christian Eucharist<sup>3</sup>. In the early part of the *Pistis Sophia* it is the word used to denote the First Mystery or first and greatest emanation of God, who is withdrawn from human contemplation and, as it were, concealed behind a veil impenetrable by the senses of man.

<sup>1</sup> p. 246, Copt.

<sup>2</sup> See last note and n. 5, p. 147 *supra*.

<sup>3</sup> Hatch, *op. cit.* p. 302 and note.

But in the part of the book with which we are now dealing it seems to refer not to hidden persons, but to secret things. These things seem to fall into two categories, one of which is spoken of as the Mystery of the Ineffable One, and the other as the Mysteries of the First Mystery. The Mystery of the Ineffable One is said to be one, but, with the provoking arithmetic peculiar to the book, it is immediately added that it "makes" three mysteries and also another five, while it is still one<sup>1</sup>. The Mysteries of the First Mystery on the other hand are said to be twelve in number, and these figures may possibly cover some allusion to the Ogdoad and the Dodecad of Valentinus<sup>2</sup>. It is also fairly clear that each of these Twelve Mysteries of the First Mystery must be some kind of ceremony, and a ceremony which can be performed without much pre-

<sup>1</sup> pp. 236, 237, Copt.

<sup>2</sup> *Loc. cit.* Or they may cover a kind of allegory, as we might say that Agape or Love makes Faith, Hope, and Charity. But I believe it to be more likely that the "12 mysteries" are letters in a word. So in the *Μέρος τευχῶν Σωτήρος* it is said of the "Dragon of the Outer Darkness," which is in fact the worst of all the hells described in that book: "And the Dragon of the Outer Darkness hath twelve true (ἀθέντη) names which are in his gates, a name according to each gate of the torture-chambers. And these names differ one from the other, but they belong to each of the twelve, so that he who saith one name, saith all the names. And these I will tell you in the Emanation of the Universe"—(p. 323, Copt.). If this be thought too trivial an explanation, Irenaeus tells us that the 18 Eons remaining after deducting the Decad or Dodecad (as the case may be) from the rest of the Pleroma were, according to the Valentinians, signified by the two first letters of the name of Jesus: ἀλλὰ καὶ διὰ τῶν προηγουμένων τοῦ ὀνόματος αὐτοῦ δύο γραμμάτων, τοῦ τε ἰῶτα καὶ τοῦ ἥτα, τοὺς δεκαοκτὼ Αἰῶνας εὐσήμως μηνύεσθαι, Irenaeus, Bk i. c. 1, § 5, p. 26, Harvey. Equally absurd according to modern ideas are the words of the *Epistle of Barnabas* (c. x., pp. 23, 24, Hilgenfeld), where after quoting a verse in Genesis about Abraham circumcising 318 of his slaves (cf. Gen. xiv. 14), the author says "What then is the knowledge (γνώσις) given therein? Learn that the 18 were first, and then after a pause, he says 300. (In) the 18, I=10, H=8, thou hast Jesus (Ἰησοῦν). And because the Cross was meant to have grace in the T, he says also 300. He expresses therefore Jesus by two letters and the Cross by one. He knows who has placed in us the ungrafted gift of teaching. None has learned from me a more genuine word. But I know that ye are worthy."

paration or many participants. This we may deduce from the following description of the merits of one of them :

"For the second mystery of the First Mystery, if it is duly accomplished in all its forms, and the man who accomplishes it shall speak the mystery over the head of a man on the point of going forth from the body, so that he throws it into his two ears :—even when the man who is going forth from the body shall have received it aforetime, and is a partaker of the word of Truth<sup>1</sup>,—verily, I say unto you that when that man shall go forth from the body of matter, his soul will make a great flash of light, and will pass through every Place until it come into the kingdom of that mystery.

"But and if that man has not [aforetime] received that mystery, and is not a partaker of the word of Truth,—verily I say unto you that man when he shall go forth from the body shall not be judged in any Place whatever, nor shall he be tormented in any Place whatever, and no fire shall touch him on account of that great mystery of the Ineffable One which is in him ; and all shall make haste to pass him from one hand to the other, and to guide him into every Place and every order, until they shall lead him before the Virgin of Light, all the Places being filled with fear before the sign of the mystery of the kingdom of that Ineffable One which shall be with him.

"And the Virgin of Light shall wonder and she shall try him, but he will not be led towards the light until he shall have accomplished all the service of the light of that mystery, that is to say, the purifications of the renunciation of the world and all the matter that is therein<sup>2</sup>. But the Virgin of Light shall seal that soul with

<sup>1</sup> "The True Word" or the Word of the Place of Truth. The latter expression is constantly used in other parts of the book, and seems to refer to the *χώρημα* or "receptacle," that is the heaven, of the Aeon *Ἀλήθεια*, that is the Decad. Cf. especially the *Μέρος τευχῶν Σωτήρος* (pp. 377, 378, Copt.), where it is said that certain baptisms and a "spiritual chrism" will lead the souls of the disciples "into the Places of Truth and Goodness, to the Place of the Holy of all Holies, to the Place in which there is neither female, nor male, nor shape in that Place, but there is Light, everlasting, ineffable."

<sup>2</sup> These *ἀποτάγματα* are set out in detail in the *Μέρος τευχῶν Σωτήρος* (pp. 255 *sqq.* Copt.), where the disciples are ordered to "preach to the whole world . . . renounce (*ἀποτασσετε*) the whole world and all the matter which is therein, and all its cares and all its sins, and in a word all its conversation (*ὁμιλῖαι*) which is therein, that ye may be worthy of the

the excellent seal which is this\*\*\*<sup>1</sup>, and she shall have it cast in the same month in which it went forth from the body of matter into a righteous body which will find the God of Truth and the excellent mysteries in order that it may receive them by inheritance and also the light for eternity. Which is the gift of the second mystery of the First Mystery of that Ineffable One<sup>2</sup>."

The only ceremony to which such grace as is here set forth was likely to be attributed by any Christian in the early age of the Church was that of Baptism. It was called by writers like Gregory of Nazianza and Chrysostom a *μυστήριον*<sup>3</sup>; while we hear as early as St Paul's time of "those who are baptized over [or on behalf of] the dead" (*βαπτίζομενοι ὑπὲρ τῶν νεκρῶν*)<sup>4</sup>, the theory being, according to Döllinger, that those who had wished during their lives to receive baptism but had not done so, could thus obtain the benefit of the prayers of the Church, which could not be offered for an unbaptized person<sup>5</sup>. So much was this the case with some sects, that it was an offence charged by writers like Tertullian against the Valentinians that they were in the habit of delaying baptism as long as possible and even of putting it off till they were about to die<sup>6</sup>, as in the case in the text. Baptism, too, was mysteries of the Light, that ye may be preserved from all the punishments which are in the judgments" and so on. It should be noted that these are only required of the psychics or animal men.

<sup>1</sup> No doubt in the Greek original the actual seal was here figured. For examples, see the Bruce Papyrus, *passim*. The idea is typically Egyptian. As M. Maspero says in his essay on "La Table d'Offrandes," *R.H.R.* t. xxxv. No. 3 (1897), p. 325: no spell was in the view of the ancient Egyptians efficacious unless accompanied by a talisman or amulet which acted as a material support to it, as the body to the soul.

<sup>2</sup> p. 238, Copt.

<sup>3</sup> Hatch, *op. cit.* p. 296, n. 1, for references.

<sup>4</sup> 1 Cor. xv. 29. The practice of "baptizing for the dead," as the A.V. has it, evidently continued into Tertullian's time. See Tertull. *de Resurrectione Carnis*, c. xlviii. p. 530, Oehler.

<sup>5</sup> Döllinger, *First Age*, p. 327.

<sup>6</sup> Hatch, *op. cit.* p. 307. The Emperor Constantine, who was baptized on his deathbed, was a case in point. The same story was told later about the Cathars or Manichaeans of Languedoc. The motive seems in all these cases to have been the same: as baptism washed away all sin, it was as well to delay it until the recipient could sin no more.



spoken of in sub-Apostolic times as the "seal" (σφραγίς)<sup>1</sup>, or impress, which may be that which the soul has to exhibit, both in the Ophite system and in that of the *Pistis Sophia*, to the rulers of the next world. In any event, the rite was looked upon by Catholic and heretic alike as an initiation or commencement of the process by which man was united with Christ. The other eleven "mysteries of the First Mystery" are not specifically described in the *Pistis Sophia*; but it is said that the receiving of any one of them will free its recipient's soul from all necessity to show seals or defences to the lesser powers and will exalt him after his death to the rank of a king in the kingdom of light, although it will not make him equal to those who have received the mystery of the Ineffable One<sup>2</sup>. It therefore seems probable that these "twelve mysteries of the First Mystery" all refer to the rite of baptism, and are called twelve instead of one only to accord with some trifling juggling with words and letters such as was common with the followers of Valentinus<sup>3</sup>. That baptism was held in the sub-Apostolic age to be, in the words of Döllinger, "not a mere sign, pledge, or symbol of grace, but an actual communication of it wrought by the risen and glorified Christ on the men He would convert and sanctify, and a bond to unite the body of the Church with its Head<sup>4</sup>," will perhaps be admitted. According to the same author, St Paul teaches that "by Baptism man is incorporated with Christ, and puts on Christ, so that the sacramental washing does away with all natural distinctions or race;—Greek and Jew, slave and free, men and women, are one in Christ, members of His body, children of God and of the seed of Abraham<sup>5</sup>." He tells us also that the same Apostle "not only divides man into body and spirit, but distinguishes in the bodily nature, the gross, visible, bodily frame, and a hidden, inner, "spiritual" body not subject to limits of space or cognizable by the senses;

<sup>1</sup> Hatch, *op. cit.* p. 295 and note, for references.

<sup>2</sup> p. 236, Copt.

<sup>3</sup> See n. 2, p. 166 *supra*.

<sup>4</sup> Döllinger, *First Age*, pp. 234, 235.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* p. 235. Rom. vi. 4; Gal. iii. 27, 29, are quoted in support.

this last, which shall hereafter be raised, is alone fit for and capable of organic union with the glorified body of Christ, of substantial incorporation with it<sup>1</sup>." If Döllinger in the xixth century could thus interpret St Paul's words, is it extraordinary that the author of the *Pistis Sophia* should put the same construction on similar statements some sixteen centuries earlier? So the late Dr Hatch, writing of baptism in this connection, says: "The expressions which the more literary ages have tended to construe metaphorically were taken literally. It was a real washing away of sins; it was a real birth into a new life; it was a real adoption into a divine sonship<sup>2</sup>."

If this be so, it seems to follow that the Mystery of the Ineffable One must be the other and the greatest of the Christian sacraments. Jesus tells His disciples that it is the "One and unique word," and that the soul of one who has received it "after going forth from the body of matter of the Archons" will become "a great flood of light" and will fly into the height, no power being able to restrain it, nor even to know whither it goes. He continues:

"It shall pass through all the Places of the Archons and all the Places of the emanations of light, nor shall it make any announcement nor defence nor give in any symbol; for no Power of the Archons nor of the emanations of light can draw nigh to that soul. But all the Places of the Archons and of the emanations of light shall sing praises, being filled with fear at the flood of light which clothes that soul, until it shall have passed through them all, and have come into the Place of the inheritance of the mystery which it has received, which is the mystery of the sole Ineffable One, and shall have become united with his members<sup>3</sup>."

He goes on to explain that the recipient of this mystery shall be higher than angels, archangels, and than even all the Powers of the Treasure-house of Light and those which are below it:

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.* p. 235. Rom. vii. 22; 1 Cor. vi. 14; Eph. iii. 16 and v. 30 are quoted in support.

<sup>2</sup> Hatch, *op. cit.* p. 342.

<sup>3</sup> p. 228, Copt.

"He is a man in the Cosmos; but he is a king in the light. He is a man in the Cosmos, but he is not of the Cosmos, and verily I say unto you, that man is myself and I am that man.

"And, in the dissolution of the Cosmos, when the universe shall be caught up, and when the number of perfect souls shall be caught up, and when I am become king in the middle of the last Parastates, and when I am king over all the emanations of light, and over the Seven Amen, and the Five Trees, and the Three Amen, and the Nine Guards, and over the Boy of a Boy, that is to say the Twin Saviours, and when I am king over the Twelve Saviours and all the numbers of perfect souls who have received the mystery of light, then all the men who have received the mystery of that Ineffable One shall be kings with me, and shall sit on my right hand and on my left in my kingdom. Verily I say unto you, Those men are I and I am those men. Wherefore I said unto you aforetime: You shall sit upon thrones on my right hand and on my left in my kingdom and shall reign with me. Wherefore I have not spared myself, nor have I been ashamed to call you my brethren and my companions, seeing that you will be fellow-kings with me in my kingdom. These things, therefore, I said unto you, knowing that I should give unto you the mystery of that Ineffable One, and that mystery is I and I am that mystery<sup>1</sup>."

That this is the supreme revelation up to which the author of the *Pistis Sophia* has been leading all through the book, there can hardly be any doubt. Its position shortly before the close of the book<sup>2</sup>, the rhapsodic and almost rhythmical phrases with which the approach to it is obscured rather than guarded, and the way in which directly the revelation is made, the author falls off into merely pastoral matters relating to the lesser mysteries, all show that the author has here reached his climax. But does this revelation mean anything else than that Jesus is Himself the victim which is to be received in the Sacrament or *μυστήριον* of the Altar? That the Christians of the first centuries really thought that in the Eucharist they united themselves to Christ by receiving His Body and Blood there can be no question, and the dogma can have come as no novelty to those who, like the Ophites, had combined with

<sup>1</sup> pp. 230, 231, Copt.

<sup>2</sup> The *Pistis Sophia* proper comes to an end twenty pages later.

Christianity the ideas which we have seen current among the Orphics as to the sacramental efficacy of the homophagous feast and the eating of the quivering flesh of the sacrifice which represented Dionysos. Döllinger gives the views of the primitive Church concisely when he says it is "because we all eat of one Eucharistic bread, and so receive the Lord's body, that we all become one body, or as St Paul says, we become members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones." "We are nourished by communion," he continues, "with the substance of His flesh and blood, and so bound to the unity of His body, the Church; and thus what was begun in Baptism is continued and perfected in the Eucharist<sup>1</sup>." Thus, Justin Martyr, who lived in the reign of Antoninus Pius, says "the food which is blessed by the prayer of His word, and from which our blood and flesh by transmutation are nourished, is the flesh and blood of that Jesus who was made flesh<sup>2</sup>." That the same idea was realized by the heretics may be gathered from what has been said above as to the wonder-working celebration of the Eucharist by Marcus, when the wine was made to change visibly into blood before the eyes of the recipient<sup>3</sup>.

It is plain also that the *Pistis Sophia* does not look upon this perfect union as within the reach of all. Basilides, the first of the Egyptian Gnostics, had said that not one in a thousand or two in ten thousand were fit to be admitted to the higher mysteries, and the same phrase is repeated by Jesus Himself in one of the later documents of the MS. of which the *Pistis Sophia* forms part<sup>4</sup>. Those who were worthy of admission to the

<sup>1</sup> Döllinger, *First Age*, p. 239. 1 Cor. x. 16 *sqq.*; Eph. v. 30, quoted in support.

<sup>2</sup> Justin Martyr was probably born 114, and martyred 165 A.D. For the passage quoted in text, see his *First Apology*, c. LXVI., where he mentions among other things that the devils set on the worshippers of Mithras to imitate the Christian Eucharist by celebrating a ceremony with bread and a cup of water.

<sup>3</sup> Hatch, *op. cit.* p. 308. This visible change of the contents of the cup of water to the semblance of blood is described in the *Mépos τευχῶν Σωτήρος* (p. 377, Copt.), and with more detail in the Bruce Papyrus. Cf. p. 183 *infra*.

<sup>4</sup> *Mépos τευχῶν Σωτήρος*, p. 354, Copt.

mysteries of the Ineffable One and of the First Mystery were the pneumatics or spiritual men predestined to them from before their birth. For the others, the psychic or animal men, there were the mysteries "of the light," which are, so to speak, the first step on the ladder of salvation<sup>1</sup>. These are nowhere described in the *Pistis Sophia* or first document of the book, the hearer being therein always referred for their details to the two great Books of Jeû mentioned above, "which Enoch wrote when I (*i.e.* Jesus) spoke with him from the tree of knowledge and from the tree of life, which were in the Paradise of Adam<sup>2</sup>." It is here expressly said that Jesus' own disciples have no need of them; but their effect is described as purifying the body of matter, and transforming their recipient into "light" of exceeding purity. On the death of one who has taken them all, his soul traverses the different heavens repeating the passwords, giving in the defences, and exhibiting the symbols peculiar to each mystery until it reaches the abode assigned to its particular degree of spiritual illumination. These mysteries of the light are open to the whole world and there is some reason for thinking they are the sacraments of the Catholic Church, the members of which body, Irenaeus says, the "heretics" (Qy the Valentinians?) held not to be saved but to be only capable of salvation<sup>3</sup>. If the recipient of these

<sup>1</sup> Whether the author of the *Pistis Sophia* really intended to describe them may be doubted; but it is to be noted that the sacraments which Jesus is represented as celebrating in the Μέρος τευχῶν Σωτήρος can hardly be they, although Jesus calls them in one place (p. 374, Copt.), "the mysteries of the light which remit sins, which themselves are appellations and names of light." These are administered to the twelve disciples without distinction, and it is evident that the author of these books is quite unacquainted with any division into pneumatic and psychic, and knows nothing of the higher mysteries called in the *Pistis Sophia* proper "the mysteries of the Ineffable One" and "the mysteries of the First Mystery." We should get over many difficulties if we supposed the two later books to be Marcosian in origin, but in any event they are later than the *Pistis Sophia*.

<sup>2</sup> p. 246, Copt. So in the Manichaean text described in Chapter XIII, Jesus is Himself called "the Tree of Knowledge."

<sup>3</sup> So Irenaeus, Bk I. c. I, § 11, pp. 53, 54, Harvey: Ἐπαιδεύθησαν γὰρ τὰ ψυχικὰ οἱ ψυχικοὶ ἀνθρώποι, οἱ δὲ ἔργων καὶ πίστεως ψιλῆς βεβαιούμενοι,

lesser mysteries die before complete initiation, he has to undergo a long and painful series of reincarnations, his soul being sent back into the Sphere of Destiny and eventually into this world by the Virgin of Light, who will, however, take care that it is placed in a "righteous" body which shall strive after the mysteries until it finds them. But the way to these lower mysteries is the complete renunciation of this world. Man naturally and normally is entirely hylic or material, being, as Jesus tells His disciples in the *Pistis Sophia*, "the very dregs of the Treasure-house, of the Places of those on the Right Hand, in the Middle, and on the Left Hand, and the dregs of the Unseen Ones and of the Archons, and, in a word, the dregs of them all<sup>1</sup>." Hence it is only by the cleansing grace of the mysteries that he can hope to escape the fate which is coming upon the Kerasmos, and to obtain these, he must avoid further pollution.

"Wherefore preach you to the whole race of men, saying: Slacken not day and night until ye find the cleansing mysteries. Say unto them: Renounce the world and all the matter that is therein; for whoso buys and sells in the world and eats and drinks in its matter, and lives in all its cares and all its conversations, takes unto himself other matter as well as his own matter. . . . Wherefore I said unto you aforetime: Renounce the whole world and all the matter that is therein lest ye add other matter to your own matter. Wherefore preach ye to the whole race of men. . . . cease not to seek day and night and stay not your hand until ye find the cleansing mysteries which will cleanse you so as to make you

καὶ μὴ τὴν τελείαν γνώσιν ἔχοντες· εἶναι δὲ τούτους ἀπὸ τῆς Ἐκκλησίας ἡμᾶς λέγουσι· διὸ καὶ ἡμῖν μὲν ἀναγκαῖον εἶναι τὴν ἀγαθὴν πρᾶξιν ἀποφαίνονται· ἄλλως γὰρ ἀδύνατον σωθῆναι. Αὐτοὺς δὲ μὴ διὰ πράξεως, ἀλλὰ διὰ τὸ φύσει πνευματικούς εἶναι, πάντα τε καὶ πάντως σωθήσεσθαι δογματίζουσιν. "For the psychic (animal) men are taught psychic things, they being made safe by works and by mere faith, and not having perfect knowledge. And they say that we of the Church are these people. Wherefore they declare that good deeds are necessary for us: for otherwise we could not be saved. But they decree that they themselves are entirely and in every thing saved, not by works, but because they are pneumatic (spiritual) by nature."

<sup>1</sup> p. 249, Copt.

pure light, that ye may go into the heights and inherit the light of my kingdom<sup>1</sup>."

We see, then, that the author of the *Pistis Sophia* really contemplated the formation of a Church within a Church, where a group of persons claiming for themselves special illumination should rule over the great body of the faithful, these last being voluntarily set apart from all communion with their fellows<sup>2</sup>. This was so close a parallel to what actually occurred in Egypt in the ivth century, when the whole male population was said with some exaggeration to have embraced the monastic life<sup>3</sup>, and submitted themselves to the rule of an ambitious and grasping episcopate, as to give us a valuable indication as to the authorship and date of the book. It may be said at the outset that the conception of the universe which appears throughout is so thoroughly Egyptian that it must have been written for Egyptian readers, who alone could have been expected to understand it without instruction. The idea of the Supreme Being as an unfathomable abyss was, as has been said in Chapter II, a very old one in Egypt, where one of the oldest cosmogonies current made Nu or the sea of waters the origin of both gods and men<sup>4</sup>. So was the peculiar theory that the lesser gods were the limbs or members of the Supreme<sup>5</sup>. An Ogdoad<sup>6</sup> or assembly of eight gods arranged in syzygies or

<sup>1</sup> p. 250, Copt. It is to be observed that these "cleansing mysteries" will only admit their recipients to the light of the Kingdom of Jesus—not to that of the First Mystery or of the Ineffable One.

<sup>2</sup> As did perhaps the Manichaeans afterwards. See *J.R.A.S.* for January, 1913, and Chap. XIII *infra*.

<sup>3</sup> So Charles Kingsley in *Hypatia*. Gibbon, *Decline and Fall*, vol. iv. c. 60, n. 15, quotes a statement of Rufinus that there were nearly as many monks living in the deserts as citizens in the towns.

<sup>4</sup> Mallet, *Le Culte de Neit à Saïs*, p. 200, points out that the God Nu described in the 18th Chapter of the *Book of the Dead* is "the infinite abyss, the *Βυθός*, the *πατήρ ἄγνωστος* of the Gnostics." So Maspero in *Rev. Critique*, 30 Sept. 1909, p. 13, who declares that the author of the *Pistis Sophia* was influenced directly or indirectly by Osirian beliefs.

<sup>5</sup> Moret, *Le verbe créateur et révélateur*, p. 286, for references.

<sup>6</sup> Maspero, *Ét. Égyptol.* t. II. p. 187: "L'ogdoade est une conception hermapolitaine qui s'est répandue plus tard sur toute l'Égypte à côté de l'ennéade d'Héliopolis. Les théologiens d'Hermopolis avaient adopté

couples was also well known in the time of the early dynasties, as was the Dodecad of twelve gods which Herodotus knew, and which M. Maspero refers on good evidence to the time of the Pyramid-Builders<sup>1</sup>. So was the view that men and other material things were made from the tears of the celestial powers<sup>2</sup>, a notion well known to Proclus the Neo-Platonist, who attributed it to the legendary Orpheus<sup>3</sup>. Not less Egyptian—perhaps in its origin exclusively Egyptian—is the view that the knowledge of the places of the world after death and their rulers was indispensable to the happiness of the dead. “Whosoever,” says M. Maspero in commenting upon some funerary texts of the Ramesside period, “knows the names of these (gods) while still on earth and is acquainted with their places in Amenti, will arrive at his own place in the other world and will be in all the places reserved for those who are justified<sup>4</sup>.” The resemblance between the system of the *Pistis Sophia* and the doctrines of the Egyptian religion in the days of the Pharaohs has been pointed out in detail by the veteran Egyptologist the late Prof. Lieblein and has been approved by M. Maspero<sup>5</sup>. It extends to particular details as well as to general ideas, as we see from the ritual inscribed on the tombs at Thebes, where each “circle” or division of the next world is said to

le concept de la neuvaine, seulement ils avaient amoindri les huit dieux qui formaient le corps du dieu principal. Ils les avaient réduits à n'être plus que des êtres presque abstraits nommés d'après la fonction qu'on leur assignait, en agissant en masse sur l'ordre et d'après l'impulsion du dieu chef. Leur ennéade se composait donc d'un dieu tout-puissant et d'une ogdoade.”

<sup>1</sup> “Son origine (l'ogdoade hermapolitaine subordonné à un corps monade) est fort ancienne: on trouve quelques-unes des divinités qui la composent mentionnées déjà dans les textes des Pyramides.” Maspero, *op. cit.* t. II. p. 383. As he says later the actual number of gods in the Ennead or Ogdoad was a matter of indifference to the ancient Egyptian: “les dieux comptaient toujours pour neuf, quand même ils étaient treize ou quinze,” *ibid.* p. 387. Cf. Amélineau, *Gnost. Ég.* pp. 294, 295.

<sup>2</sup> See n. 5, p. 175 *supra*, and Maspero, “Hypogées Royaux,” *Ét. Égyptol.* II. p. 130, n. 2.

<sup>3</sup> See n. 2, p. 153 *supra*.

<sup>4</sup> Maspero, “Hypogées Royaux,” t. II. p. 121.

<sup>5</sup> Maspero, *Rev. Crit.* 30 Sept. 1909, p. 13.



have its own song and its own "mystery," an idea often met with in the *Pistis Sophia*<sup>1</sup>. Even the doctrine in the *Pistis Sophia* that the dead had to exhibit a "seal" as well as a "defence" to the guardians of the heavenly places is explained by the Egyptian theory that no spell was effective without an amulet, which acted as a kind of material support to it<sup>2</sup>. The greater part of the allusions in the *Pistis Sophia* are in fact unintelligible, save to those with some acquaintance with the religious beliefs of the Pharaonic Egyptians.

At the same time it is evident that the MS. of the *Pistis Sophia* that has come down to us is not the original form of the book. All the scholars who have studied it are agreed that the Coptic version has been made from a Greek original by a scribe who had no very profound acquaintance with the first-named tongue<sup>3</sup>. This appears not only from the frequent appearance in it of Greek words following Coptic ones of as nearly as possible the same meaning; but from the fact that the scribe here and there gives us others declined according to the rules not of Coptic but of Greek accidence. We must therefore look for an author who, though an Egyptian and acquainted with the native Egyptian religion, would naturally have written in Greek; and on the whole there is no one who fulfils these requirements so well as Valentinus himself. The fact that the author never quotes from the Gospel according to St John indicates that it had not come to his knowledge; for the opening chapter of St John's Gospel contains many expressions that could easily on the Gnostic system of interpretation be made to accord with the Valentinian theology, and is in fact so used by later writers of the same school as the author of the *Pistis Sophia*<sup>4</sup>. Now the first direct and acknowledged quotation

<sup>1</sup> Maspero, "Hypogées Royaux," t. II. p. 118. Cf. *Pistis Sophia*, p. 84, Copt. and elsewhere.

<sup>2</sup> Maspero, "La Table d'Offrandes," *R.H.R.* t. XXXV. (1897) p. 325. As has been said, in the *Ascensio Isaïae*, anyone passing from one heaven to another has to give a password, but not to exhibit a seal.

<sup>3</sup> Amélineau, *Gnost. Ég.* p. 196; Schmidt, *Koptisch-Gnostische Schriften*, Bd I. p. xiii.

<sup>4</sup> It is so used in the *Excerpta Theodoti*, and in the Papyrus Bruce. See p. 190, *infra*.

from St John's Gospel that we have is that made by Theophilus, who was made bishop of Antioch in A.D. 170, and the generally received opinion is that this Gospel, whenever written, was not widely known long before this date<sup>1</sup>. The only founders of Gnostic sects of Egyptian birth prior to this were Basilides and Valentinus, and of these two, Valentinus is the more likely author, because he, unlike his predecessor, evidently taught for general edification, and possessed, as the Fathers agree, a numerically large following. We have, moreover, some reason for thinking that Valentinus actually did write a book with some such title as the *Sophia*. Tertullian, in his declamation against the Valentinians, quotes a sentence from "the Wisdom (Lat. *Sophia*) not of Valentinus but of Solomon<sup>2</sup>." It has been suggested that he is here referring to some saying of the Valentinian aeon *Sophia*; but no writings would in the nature of things be attributed to her, and, as M. Amélineau points out, it is more natural to think that he was here comparing a book with a book<sup>3</sup>. This figure of rhetoric was a favourite one with Tertullian, for in his treatise *De Carne Christi* we find him quoting in like manner the Psalms—"not the Psalms of Valentinus, the apostate, heretic, and Platonist, but the Psalms of David<sup>4</sup>." The fact that the story in the British Museum MS. is called *Pistis Sophia* instead of *Sophia* only need not hinder us from identifying this with the work presumably referred to by Tertullian, because this title is, as has been said, the work of another scribe than those who transcribed the original; and *Pistis Sophia*

<sup>1</sup> Jean Reville, *Le Quatrième Évangile*, Paris, 1901, p. 321. Mgr Duchesne, *Early Christian Church*, pp. 102, 192, says in effect that St John's Gospel appeared after the Apostle's death and was not accepted without opposition. He thinks Tatian and Irenaeus the first writers who quoted from it with acknowledgement of its authorship. If we put the date of Tatian's birth at 120 (see *Dict. Christian Biog. s.h.n.*) and allow a sufficient period for the initiation into heathen mysteries which he mentions, for his conversion and for his becoming a teacher, we do not get a much earlier date than 170 for his acceptance of the Fourth Gospel. Irenaeus was, of course, later in date than Tatian.

<sup>2</sup> Tertullian, *Adv. Valentinianos*, c. 2.

<sup>3</sup> Amélineau, *Gnost. Ég.* p. 180.

<sup>4</sup> Tertullian, *de Carne Christi*, c. 20.

is sometimes spoken of in the MS. itself as Sophia only<sup>1</sup>. Moreover, there is some reason for thinking that certain of the Fathers and even their Pagan adversaries had seen and read the story of *Pistis Sophia*. The allusion quoted above from Origen to gates opening of their own accord seems to refer to one of its episodes, and Tertullian, in the treatise in which he says he is exposing the original tenets of the sect<sup>2</sup>, uses many expressions that he can hardly have borrowed from any other source. Thus, he speaks of Sophia "breaking away from her spouse<sup>3</sup>" which is the expression used by *Pistis Sophia* in her first Metanoia and is in no way applicable to the Valentinian Sophia of Irenaeus or Hippolytus. He again speaks of the same Sophia as being all but swallowed up and dissolved in "the substance" evidently of Chaos, which is the fate which *Pistis Sophia* anticipates for herself in the MS. Tertullian, like the *Pistis Sophia*, also assigns to the psychic substance the place of honour or right hand in the *quasi*-material world, while the hylic is relegated in both to the left hand<sup>4</sup>. The Paradise of Adam is said by him to be fixed by Valentinus "above the third heaven<sup>5</sup>" as it is in the *Pistis Sophia*, if, as we may suppose, the soul of the protoplast dwelt in the same place as that of Elijah. The name of *Ecclesia* or the Church is given not only to a particular aeon in the Pleroma, but also to the divine power breathed into man from a higher world in both Tertullian and the *Pistis Sophia*<sup>6</sup>, and, in the treatise *De Carne Christi*, Tertullian alludes contemptuously to an heretical doctrine that Christ possessed "any new kind of flesh miraculously obtained from the stars<sup>7</sup>," which seems to refer to the taking by Jesus in the opening of the *Pistis Sophia* of a body from "Barbelo" the goddess or Triple Power

<sup>1</sup> *E.g.* p. 47, Copt. Cf. also *ibid.* pp. 147, 170, 176.

<sup>2</sup> Tertullian, *adv. Val.* c. v.

<sup>3</sup> *Op. cit.* c. 9.

<sup>4</sup> *Op. cit.* c. 18.

<sup>5</sup> *Op. cit.* c. 20.

<sup>6</sup> *Op. cit.* c. 25.

<sup>7</sup> Tertullian, *de Carne Christi*, c. 9. Irenaeus, Bk II. c. 7, § 1, p. 270, Harvey, seems to have known both of Barbelo and of the Virgin of Light, since he speaks of *corpora sursum . . . spiritalia et lucida*, "spiritual and translucent bodies on high" casting a shadow below *in quam Matrem suam descendisse dicunt* "into which they allege their Mother descended."

set over matter and inspiring the benefic planet Venus. For all which reasons it seems probable that in the *Pistis Sophia* we have the translation of an authentic work by Valentinus.

The *Pistis Sophia*, however, is not the only work in the British Museum MS. The first and second books of it, as they are called by the annotator, come to an end, rather abrupt but evidently intentional, on the 252nd page of the MS. There then appears the heading in the hand of the annotator "Part of the Texts of the Saviour<sup>1</sup>," and on this follow two pages dealing with the "members" of the Ineffable One, as to which it is expressly said that only a partial revelation is made<sup>2</sup>. These seem to have slipped out of their proper place, and are followed by two discontinuous extracts from another treatise, the second of which is also headed by the annotator "Part of the Texts of the Saviour." This second part, which we shall venture to take before the other, is evidently the introduction to or the commencement of a new treatise, for it begins with the statement that "After they had crucified Our Lord Jesus He rose from the dead on the third day," and that His disciples gathered round Him, reminding Him that they had left all to follow Him<sup>3</sup>. Jesus "standing on the shore of the sea Ocean," then makes invocation to the "Father of every Fatherhood, boundless light," in a prayer composed of Egyptian and Hebrew words jumbled together after the fashion of the spells in the Magic Papyri<sup>4</sup>. He then shows

<sup>1</sup> οὐ μέρος ἦτε ἡ τεύχος ᾧ κωτήρ, or (in Greek) Μέρος τευχῶν Σωτήρος.

<sup>2</sup> "This I say to you in paradigm, and likeness and similitude, but not in truth of shape, nor have I revealed the word in truth," p. 253, Copt. So in the next page (p. 254, Copt.), Jesus says of the perfect initiate that "He also has found the words of the Mysteries, those which I have written to you according to similitude—the same are the members of the Ineffable One." From His mention of "writing," one would imagine that the reference here is to documents such as the Bruce Papyrus which gives the pictures of "seals" together with cryptographically written words.

<sup>3</sup> p. 357, Copt. This opening sentence could not have been written by one of the Valentinians of Hadrian's time, who, as has been said above, "did not choose to call Jesus, Lord," Irenaeus, Bk I. c. 1, i. p. 12, Harvey.

<sup>4</sup> In the address of Jesus beginning "O my Father, Father of every Fatherhood, boundless light" with which this part of the M. τ. σ. opens, we

the disciples the "disk of the sun" as a great dragon with his tail in his mouth drawn by four white horses and the disk of the moon like a ship drawn by two white steers<sup>1</sup>. The two

can, with a little good will, identify nearly every word of the "galimatias" which at first sight seems mere gibberish. Thus, the whole invocation reads: *αεισιων, ιαω, αωϊ, οιαψινωθερ, θερ[ι]νοψ, νωψιθερ, ζαγουρη, παγουρη, νεθμομαωθ, νεψιομαωθ, μαραχαχθα, θωβαρπαβαν, θαρναχαχαν, ζοροκοθορα Ιεου Σαβαωθ*. The seven vowels to which many mystical interpretations have been assigned, and which have even been taken for a primitive system of musical notation (C. E. Ruelle, "Le Chant des Sept Voyelles Grecques," *Rev. des Ét. Grecques*, Paris, 1889, t. II. p. 43, and pp. 393-395), probably express the sound to Greek ears of the Jewish pronunciation of Yahweh or Jehovah. The word *Iao* we have before met with many times both as a name of Dionysos and otherwise, and is here written anagrammatically from the difficulty which the Greeks found in dealing with Semitic languages written the reverse way to their own. The word *ψινωθερ* which follows and is also written as an anagram is evidently an attempt to transcribe in Greek letters the Egyptian words *P, Shai, neter* (*P* = Def. article, *Shai* = the Egyptian God of Fate whose name Revillout, *Rev. Égyptol.* Paris, 1892, pp. 29-38, thinks means "The Highest," and *neter* or *nuter* the determinative for "god"), the whole reading "Most High God." The words *ζαγουρη παγουρη* (better, *πατουρη*) are from the Hebrew roots *פָּתַח* and seem to be the "he that openeth and no man shutteth; and shutteth and no man openeth" of Rev. iii. 7. *Νεθμομαωθ*, which is often found in the Magic Papyrus, is reminiscent of the Egyptian *neb maat* "Lord of Truth," the following *νεψιομαωθ* being probably a variant by a scribe who was uncertain of the orthography. *Μαραχαχθα* I can make nothing of, although as the phrase *νεφθομαωθ μαραχαχθα* appears in the Magic Papyrus of Leyden generally called W (Leemans, *Papyri Graeci*, etc. t. II. p. 154) in a spell there said to be written by "Thphe the Hierogrammateus" for "Ochus the king," it is evidently intended for Egyptian. In the same spell appear the words *θαρναμαχαχ ζοροκοθορα* and *θωβαρπαβαν* which are evidently the same as those in the M. r. σ., and of which I will only say that, while Mr King supposes *ζοροκοθορα* to mean "light-gatherer," *θωβαρπαβαν* is in the leaden *tabula devotionis* of Carthage (Molinier, "Imprecation gravée sur plomb," *Mem. de la Soc. Nat. des Antiquaires de France*, série VI. t. VIII. Paris, 1897, pp. 212-216) described as *τον θεον του της παλινγενειας* "the god of rebirth." The concluding words are of course merely "Yahweh of Hosts."

<sup>1</sup> The description of the moon-chariot drawn by two white oxen is found in Claudian's *Proserpine*. According to Cumont (*Textes et Monuments relatifs aux Mystères de Mithra*, t. I. p. 126 and note) it was not until Hadrian's time that this conception, which seems to have been Persian in origin, became fixed in the West.

steering oars of this last are depicted as a male and a female dragon who take away the light from the rulers of the stars among whom they move. Jesus and His disciples are then translated to the place called the "Middle Way"<sup>1</sup>. He there describes how the Archons of Adamas rebelled and persisted in engendering and bringing forth "rulers and archangels and angels and ministers and decans." We further hear, for the first time, that the Twelve Aeons, instead of being, as in the *Pistis Sophia*, all under the rule of Adamas, are divided into two classes, one Jabraoth ruling over six of them and Sabaoth Adamas over the other six; that Jabraoth and his subjects repented and practised "the mysteries of the light," including, as we have seen, abstinence from generation<sup>2</sup>, whereupon they were taken up by Jeû to the light of the sun between the "places of the middle and those of the left." "Sabaoth Adamas," on the other hand, with his subjects to the number of 1800, were bound to the sphere, 360 powers being set over them, the 360 being controlled by the five planets Saturn, Mars, Mercury, Venus, and Jupiter. Jesus then describes in great detail the different tortures in the Middle Way and two other hells called Chaos and Amenti, wherein the souls of uninitiated men who commit sins are tormented between their incarnations<sup>3</sup>, the final punishment being in the worst cases

<sup>1</sup> This "Middle Way" has nothing to do with the τόπος or "place" of the middle, where are set in the *Pistis Sophia* proper the powers who preside over incarnation. It is below the visible sphere (p. 364, Copt.) and is met with in Rabbinic lore. See Kohler, *op. cit.* p. 587.

<sup>2</sup> This division of the Twelve Aeons into two halves seems at first sight inconsistent with the description in the *Pistis Sophia* proper which always speaks of them as Twelve. Yet it is plain that the author of the *Pistis Sophia* knew the legend here given, as he makes John the Divine speak (p. 12, Copt.) of "the rulers who belong to the Aeon of Jabraoth" and had made peace with the mysteries of the light. These "rulers who repented" are again mentioned on p. 195, Copt. In the other part of the Μέρος τευχῶν Σωτήριος (p. 356, Copt.), it is also said that the souls of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are to be placed in "the Place of Jabraoth and of all the rulers who repented" until Jesus can take them with Him to the light. So the Papyrus Bruce (Amélineau, p. 239).

<sup>3</sup> There are seven pages missing between the descriptions of the tortures of the Middle Way and those of Amenti and Chaos, the gap occurring at

annihilation. He then affords His disciples a vision of "fire and water and wine and blood" which He declares He brought with Him on His Incarnation, and celebrates a sacrament which He calls "the baptism of the First Oblation," but which seems to be a peculiar form of the Eucharist with invocations in the jargon alluded to above, and a thaumaturgic conversion of the wine used in it into water and *vice versâ*<sup>1</sup>. There are several *lacunae* in this part of the MS., and the tortures for certain specified sins are differently given in different places, so that it is probable that with the *Part of the Texts of the Saviour* has here been mixed extracts from another document whose title has been lost<sup>2</sup>.

The remaining document of the British Museum MS., being the third in order of place, was probably taken from the same book as that last described, and was placed out of its natural order to satisfy the pedantry of the scribes, the rule in such cases being that the longer document should always come first. Like its successor, it deals largely with the "punishments" of the souls who have not received the mysteries of the light, and introduces a new and still more terrible hell in the shape of the "Dragon of Outer Darkness" which it declares to be a vast dragon surrounding the world, having his tail in his mouth, and containing twelve chambers, wherein the souls of the uninitiated dead are tortured after their trans-migrations are ended until they reach the annihilation reserved for them at the last judgment<sup>3</sup>. There is also given here a

p. 379, Copt. It is possible that what follows after this is not from the Μέρος τευχῶν Σωτήρος but an extract from yet another document.

<sup>1</sup> In the text of the M. τ. σ. (p. 377, Copt.), Jesus simply asks His father for a sign, and "the sign is made which Jesus had said." In the Papyrus Bruce where the same ceremony is described in almost identical words, it is said that the wine of the offering was turned into water which leaped forth of the vase which contained it so as to serve for baptism. Cf. Amélineau, *Gnost. Ég.* p. 253. That Marcus the magician by juggling produced similar prodigies, see Irenaeus, Bk I. c. 7, II. pp. 116, 117, Harvey.

<sup>2</sup> The name of Jaldabaoth, which in the whole of the rest of the MS. is spelt ἰαλλὰβᾶωθ, appears on p. 380 immediately after the *lacuna* of seven pages as ἰαλταβᾶωθ, Ialtabaoth, which supports the theory of another author.

<sup>3</sup> This is also briefly mentioned in the part of the Μέρος τευχῶν Σωτήρος just described. See pp. 386, *sqq.*, Copt.

very curious account of man's invisible part, which is said to be made up of the "Power" infused into it by the Virgin of Light which returns to its giver after death<sup>1</sup>, and the Moira or Fate which it derives from the Sphere of Destiny and has as its sole function to lead the man it inhabits to the death he is predestined to die<sup>2</sup>. Then there is the Counterfeit of the Spirit, which is in effect a duplicate of the soul proper and is made out of the matter of the wicked Archons. This not only incites the soul to sin, but follows it about after death, denouncing to the powers set over the punishments the sins it has induced the soul to commit<sup>3</sup>. All these punishments, to describe which is evidently the purpose of all the extracts from the *Texts of the Saviour* here given, are escaped by those who have received the mysteries.

The *Texts of the Saviour* therefore clearly belong to a later form of Gnosticism than the *Pistis Sophia* properly so called. The author's intention is evidently to frighten his readers with the fate reserved for those who do not accept the teaching of the sect. For this purpose the division of mankind into pneumatic, psychic, and hylic is ignored<sup>4</sup>, and this is especially

<sup>1</sup> This appears to contradict the *Pistis Sophia* proper, where it is said that the Virgin of Light gives the soul, and the Great Iao the Good the power.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. the speech of the crocodile in the tale of the *Predestined Prince*: "Ah, moi, je suis ton destin qui te poursuit; quoi que tu fasses, tu seras ramené sur mon chemin." Maspero, *Contes Populaires de l'Égypte Ancienne*, 3rd ed. Paris, n. d. p. 175.

<sup>3</sup> Evidently the Egyptian *ka* or double. Cf. the "Heart Amulet" described by Erman, *Handbook of Egyptian Religion*, pp. 142, 143, where the dead says to his heart: "Oh heart that I have from my mother! Oh heart that belongs to my spirit, do not appear against me as witness, provide no opposition against me before the judges, do not contradict me before him who governs the balance, thou art my spirit that is in my body...." This seems to be a transcription of the 30th Chapter of the *Book of the Dead*, of which there are several variants, none of which however directly suggest that the heart is the accuser to be dreaded. See Budge, *Book of the Dead*, 1909, vol. II. pp. 146-152.

<sup>4</sup> Thus the M. r. c. says (p. 355, Copt.) "For this I despoiled myself (i.e. laid aside my heavenly nature) to bring the mysteries into the Cosmos, for all are under [the yoke of] sin, and all lack the gifts of the mysteries.... Verily, verily I say unto you: until I came into the Cosmos, no soul entered



plain in certain passages where the torments after death of those who follow "the doctrines of error" are set forth. Magic, which has been spoken of with horror in the *Pistis Sophia*, is here made use of in the celebration of the rites described, and the miraculous power of healing the sick and raising the dead, though said to be of archontic, *i.e.* diabolic, origin is here recommended as a means to be employed under certain safeguards for the purpose of converting "the whole world<sup>1</sup>." Even the duration of the punishments and the different bodies into which the souls of the men are to be cast are made to depend upon the relative positions of the stars and planets which seem to be interpreted according to the rules of the astrology of the time,—a so-called science, which is spoken of scornfully in the *Pistis Sophia* itself<sup>2</sup>. Yet it is evident that the author or authors of the *Texts of the Saviour* are acquainted with the

into the light." Contrast this with the words of the *Pistis Sophia* proper (p. 250, Copt.): "Those who are of the light have no need of the mysteries, because they are pure light," which are made the "interpretation" of the text: "They that are whole have no need of a physician, but they that are sick." See also the *Pistis Sophia*, p. 246, Copt., where it is said of the mysteries promised by Jesus that "they lead every race of men inwards into the highest places according to the *χαρρημα* of the inheritance, so that ye have no need of the rest of the lower mysteries, but you will find them in the two books of Jeû which Enoch wrote etc."

<sup>1</sup> p. 280, Copt.

<sup>2</sup> M. r. σ. p. 388, Copt., where it is said that the soul of the righteous but uninitiated man is after death taken into Amenti and afterwards into the Middle Way, being shown the tortures in each place, "but the breath of the flame of the punishments shall only afflict him a little." Afterwards he is taken to the Virgin of Light, who sets him before the Little Sabaoth the Good until the Sphere be turned round so that Zeus (♂) and Aphrodite (♀) come into aspect with the Virgin of Light and Kronos (♄) and Ares (♂) come after them. She then puts the soul into a righteous body, which she plainly could not do unless under the favourable influence of the "benefics" ♀ and ♀. This seems also to be the dominant idea of the *Excerpta Theodoti*, *q.v.* Compare this, however, with the words of the *Pistis Sophia* proper (pp. 27, 28, Copt.) where Mary Magdalene explains that the alteration made by Jesus in the course of the stars was effected in order to baffle those skilled in the mysteries taught by the angels "who came down" (as in the Book of Enoch), from predicting the future by astrology and magic arts learned from the sinning angels.

book which precedes it; for in a description of the powers which Jeû, who appears in both as the angelic arranger of the Kerasmos, "binds" in the five planets set to rule over it, we learn that he draws a power from "Pistis Sophia, the daughter of Barbelo" and binds it in the planet Venus or Aphrodite<sup>1</sup>. As this is the only reference to her, and receives no further explanation, it is plain that the writer assumed his readers to be well acquainted with Pistis Sophia's history, and Jeû, Melchisidek, Adamas, and Jaldabaoth, now one of the torturers in Chaos, appear, as we have seen, in both works. The author of the *Texts of the Saviour* also shows himself the avowed opponent of the Pagan deities still worshipped in the early Christian centuries, as is evidenced by his making not only the Egyptian Typhon, but Adonis, Persephone, and Hecate, fiends in hell. Oddly enough, however, he gives an explanation of the myth of the two springs of memory and oblivion that we have seen in the Orphic gold plates in the following passage, which may serve as an example of the style of the book:

"Jesus said: When the time set by the Sphere of Destiny<sup>2</sup> for a man that is a persistent slanderer to go forth from the body is fulfilled, there come unto him Abiuth and Charmon, the receivers of Ariel<sup>3</sup>, and lead forth his soul from the body, that they may take it about with them for three days, showing it the creatures of the world. Thereafter they drag it into Amenti unto Ariel that he may torment it in his torments for eleven months and twenty-one days. Thereafter they lead it into Chaos unto Jaldabaoth and his forty-nine demons, that each of his demons may set upon it for eleven months and twenty-one days with whips of smoke.

<sup>1</sup> p. 361, Copt.

<sup>2</sup> That is the Sphere of Destiny acting through its emissary the Moira or Fate described above, p. 184 *supra*.

<sup>3</sup> It is a curious example of the fossilizing, so to speak, of ancient names in magic that Shakespeare should preserve for us in the *Tempest* and *Macbeth* the names of Ariel and Hecate which we find in the M. r. s. No doubt both were taken by him from mediaeval grimoires which themselves copied directly from the Graeco-Egyptian Magic Papyri mentioned in Chap. III *supra*. Cf. the use of Greek "names of God" like *ischiros* (sic!) *athanatos*, etc. in Reginald Scot's *Discovery of Witchcraft*, *passim*.

Thereafter they lead it into rivers of smoke and seas of fire that they may torment it therein eleven months and twenty-one days. Thereafter they lead it on high into the Middle Way that each of the Archons of the Middle Way may torment it with his own torments another eleven months and twenty-one days. And thereafter they lead it unto the Virgin of Light who judges the righteous and the sinners, and she shall judge it. And when the Sphere is turned round, she delivers it to her receivers that they may cast it forth among the Aeons of the Sphere. And the servants of the Sphere lead it into the water which is below the Sphere, that the boiling steam may eat into it, until it cleanse it thoroughly. Then Jaluha the receiver of Sabaoth Adamas, bearing the cup of oblivion delivers it to the soul, that it may drink therein and forget all the places and the things therein through which it has passed<sup>1</sup>. And it is placed in an afflicted body wherein it shall spend its appointed time<sup>2</sup>."

The object of the cup of oblivion is obviously that the wicked man may learn nothing from the torments he has endured. In the case of the righteous but uninitiated dead, the baleful effect of this cup will be annulled by "the Little Sabaoth the Good" who will administer to him another cup "of perception and understanding and wisdom" which will make the soul seek after the mysteries of light, on finding which it will inherit light eternal.

It would be easy to see in these features of the *Texts of the Saviour* the work of Marcus the magician who, as was said in a former chapter, taught, according to the Fathers, a corrupted form of the doctrine of Valentinus for his own interested purposes<sup>3</sup>. The distinguishing feature about his celebration of the Eucharist is the same as that given in the *Texts of the*

<sup>1</sup> So that it could not profit by the knowledge of the awful punishments prepared for sinners. I do not know that this idea occurs elsewhere.

<sup>2</sup> p. 380, Copt.

<sup>3</sup> The Marcosian authorship of the whole MS. is asserted by Bunsen, *Hippolytus and his Age*, vol. I. p. 47. Köstlin, *Über das gnostische System des Buch Pistis Sophia* in the *Theologische Jahrbücher* of Baur and Zeller, Tübingen, 1854, will have none of it, and declares the *Pistis Sophia* to be an Ophite work. In this, the first commentator on the book is followed by Grüber, *Der Ophiten*, Würzburg, 1864, p. 5, §§ 3, 4.

Saviour, and as Clement of Alexandria was acquainted with a sect in his day which substituted water for wine therein<sup>1</sup>, it is probable that Marcosians were to be found during the latter part of the IIIrd century in Egypt. It is also to be noted that the annotator has written upon the blank leaf which separates the first and second books of the *Pistis Sophia* a cryptogram concealing, apparently, the names of the Ineffable One and the other higher powers worshipped by Valentinus, and this seems to be constructed in much the same way as the isopsephisms and other word-puzzles attributed by Irenaeus to Marcus<sup>2</sup>. The mixture of Hebrew names and words with Egyptian ones in the prayer of Jesus given in the *Texts of*

<sup>1</sup> Clem. Alex. *Strom.* Bk I. c. 19.

<sup>2</sup> Thus, according to Marcus (Irenaeus, Bk I. c. 8, § 11, pp. 145, 146, Harvey), "that name of the Saviour which may be pronounced, *i.e.* Jesus, is composed of six letters, but His ineffable name of 24." The cryptogram in the *Pistis Sophia* is in these words (p. 125, Copt.): "These are the names which I will give thee from the Boundless One downwards. Write them with a sign that the sons of God may show them forth of this place. This is the name of the Deathless One  $\overline{a}\overline{a}\overline{a} \overline{\omega}\overline{\omega}\overline{\omega}$ , and this is the name of the word by which the Perfect Man is moved:  $\omega\omega\omega$ . These are the interpretations of the names of the mysteries. The first is  $\overline{a}\overline{a}\overline{a}$ , the interpretation of which is  $\phi\phi\phi$ . The second which is  $\mu\mu\mu$  or which is  $\omega\omega\omega$ , its interpretation is  $\overline{a}\overline{a}\overline{a}$ . The third is  $\psi\psi\psi$ , its interpretation is  $\omega\omega\omega$ . The fourth is  $\phi\phi\phi$ , its interpretation is  $\nu\nu\nu$ . The fifth is  $\delta\delta\delta$ , its interpretation is  $\overline{a}\overline{a}\overline{a}$ , which above the throne is  $\overline{a}\overline{a}\overline{a}$ . This is the interpretation of the second  $\overline{a}\overline{a}\overline{a}\overline{a}$ ,  $\overline{a}\overline{a}\overline{a}\overline{a}$ ,  $\overline{a}\overline{a}\overline{a}\overline{a}$ , which is the interpretation of the whole name." The line drawn above the three Alphas and Omegas is used in the body of the text to denote words in a foreign (*i.e.* non-Egyptian) language such as Hebrew; but in the Papyrus Bruce about to be described, the same letters without any line above are given as the name of "the Father of the Pleroma." See Amélineau's text, p. 113. The "moving" of the image ( $\pi\lambda\acute{o}\sigma\mu\alpha$ ) of the Perfect Man is referred to in Hippolytus (*op. cit.* p. 144, Cruice). That the Tetragrammaton was sometimes written by Jewish magicians with three Jods or *i.i.i.* see Gaster, *The Oldest Version of Midrash Megillah*, in Kohut's Semitic Studies, Berlin, 1897, p. 172. So on a magic cup in the Berlin Museum, conjuration is made "in the name of Jahve the God of Israel who is enthroned upon the cherubim...and in the name  $\overline{A} \overline{A} \overline{A} \overline{A}$ " (Stübe, *Judisch-Babylonische Zaubertexte*, Halle, 1895, pp. 23-27). For the meaning of the words "above the throne," see Franck, *La Kabbale*, p. 45, n. 2.

the Saviour would agree well with what the last-named Father says about Marcus being a Jew, and a prayer which he represents Marcus as making over the head of a convert baptized into his sect is couched in a jargon of the same character<sup>1</sup>. On the other hand, the opening sentence of the book calls Jesus "our Lord," which Irenaeus tells us the Valentinians carefully abstained from doing<sup>2</sup>, and the long and detailed description of the different hells and their tortures is much more Egyptian than Jewish<sup>3</sup>. The remark attributed to Basilides as to one in a thousand and two in ten thousand being worthy to take the higher mysteries is here put into the mouth of Jesus, and perhaps it would be safer to attribute for the present the *Texts of the Saviour* not to Marcus himself, but to some later Gnostic who fused together his teaching with that of the earlier and more disinterested professors of Egyptian Gnosticism.

The same remarks apply with but little modification to some other fragments of Gnostic writings which have come down to us. In the Bodleian Library at Oxford is to be seen a MS. written on papyrus, which was brought to this country by the Abyssinian traveller, Bruce. This also is in the Sahidic dialect of Coptic, and although it has been badly damaged and the ink is rapidly disappearing in the damp climate of Oxford, yet a copy taken nearly a century ago by Woide makes its decipherment possible in most places. The Bruce Papyrus, like the British Museum parchment MS., contains more than one document. Unfortunately the arrangement of the leaves is by no means certain, and the two scholars who have studied it most thoroughly differ almost as widely as possible as to the order of its contents. M. Amélineau, a celebrated Egyptologist and Coptic scholar, who published in 1882 a copy of

<sup>1</sup> The opening words of the invocation βασιμὰ χαμοσσὴ βασιανορὰ μισταδία ροναδὰ κουστὰ βαβοφὸρ καλαχθεῖ which Irenaeus (Bk I. c. 14, § 2, pp. 183, 184, Harvey) quotes in this connection from Marcus certainly read, as Renan (*L'Église Chrétienne*, p. 154, n. 3) points out, "In the name of Achamoth" (i.e. Sophia).

<sup>2</sup> See n. 3, p. 180, *supra*. In the *Pistis Sophia* proper Jesus is never spoken of save as "the Saviour" or as "the First Mystery."

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Maspero, *Hypogées Royaux*, *passim*, esp. pp. 157 and 163.

the text with a French translation in the *Notices et Extraits* of the Académie des Inscriptions, considers that the treatises contained in it are only two in number, the first being called by the author in what seems to be its heading *The Book of the Knowledge of the Invisible God* and the second *The Book of the Great Word in Every Mystery*. Dr Carl Schmidt, of the University of Berlin, on the other hand, who, like M. Amélineau, has studied the Papyrus at Oxford, thinks that he can distinguish in the Bruce Papyrus no less than six documents, of which the first two are according to him the two books of Jeû referred to in the *Pistis Sophia*, two others, fragments of Gnostic prayers, the fifth a fragment on the passage of the soul through the Archons of the Middle Way, and the sixth, an extract from an otherwise unknown Gnostic work which he does not venture to identify further<sup>1</sup>. To enter into the controversy raised by this diversity of opinion would take one outside the limits of the present work ; but it may be said that at least one, and that the most important, of the documents in question must be later than the *Pistis Sophia*. Not only does this—which M. Amélineau calls the *Book of the Knowledge of the Invisible God* and Dr Schmidt “Unbekanntes Altgnostisches Werk”—quote the opening words of St John’s Gospel : “In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God, and the Word was God without whom nothing was made<sup>2</sup>,”

<sup>1</sup> Schmidt’s study of the Bruce Papyrus with a full text and translation was published in the *Texte und Untersuchungen* of von Gebhardt and Harnack under the title *Gnostische Schriften in Koptischer Sprache aus dem Codex Brucianus*, Leipzig, 1892. He republished the translation of this together with one of the *Pistis Sophia* in the series of early Greek Christian literature undertaken by the Patristic Committee of the Royal Prussian Academy of Sciences under the title *Koptisch-Gnostische Schriften*, Bd i. Leipzig, 1905. His arrangement of the papyrus leaves makes much better sense than that of Amélineau, but it is only arrived at by eliminating all passages which seem to be inconsequent and attributing them to separate works. The fragments which he distinguishes as A and B and describes as “gnostischen Gebetes,” certainly appear to form part of those which he describes as the two “books of Jeû.”

<sup>2</sup> Amélineau, “Notice sur le Papyrus gnostique Bruce,” *Notices et Extraits des MSS. de la Bibl. Nat.* etc. Paris, 1891, p. 106. This would seem to make matter the creation of God, but the author gets out of the dilemma

which, as has been said, the author of the *Pistis Sophia* was unable to do ; but it mentions in briefer form than this last the heavenly origin of the souls of the Twelve Apostles<sup>1</sup>. There is also in the same document a description of what appears to be the "emanation of the universe," in which the following passage occurs :

"And He [*i.e.* the Ineffable One] heard them [a prayer by the lesser powers is referred to]. He sent them powers capable of discernment, and knowing the arrangement of the hidden Eons. He sent them according to the arrangement of those who are hidden<sup>2</sup>. He established their Orders according to the orders of the Height, and according to the hidden arrangement they began from below upward in order that the building might unite them. He created the æry earth as a place of habitation for those who had gone forth, in order that they might dwell thereon until those which were below them should be made strong. Then he created the true habitation within it<sup>3</sup>, the Place of Repentance (Metanoia) within it, the Place of Repentance within it, the antitype of Aerodios<sup>4</sup>. Then [he created] the Place of Repentance within

by affirming (*op. cit.* p. 126) that "that which was not was the evil which is manifested in matter" and that while that which exists is called αἰώνιος, "everlasting," that which does not exist is called ὕλη, "matter."

<sup>1</sup> Amélineau, *op. cit.* p. 231.

<sup>2</sup> This word arrangement (οἰκονομία) occurs constantly in the *Pistis Sophia*, as when we read (p. 193, Copt.) that the last παραστατης by the command of the First Mystery placed Jeû, Melchisedek, and four other powers in the τοπος of those who belong to the right hand προς οἰκονομίας of the Assembly of the Light. There, as here, it doubtless means that they were arranged in the same order as the powers above them in pursuance of the principle that "that which is above is like that which is below," or, in other words, of the doctrine of correspondences. From the Gnostics the word found its way into Catholic theology, as when Tertullian (*adv. Praxeam*, c. 3) says that the majority of simple-minded Christians "not understanding that though God be one, he must yet be believed to exist with his οἰκονομία, were frightened." Cf. Hatch, *H.L.* p. 324.

<sup>3</sup> Perhaps the House or Place of Ἀλήθεια or Truth many times alluded to in the M. τ. σ.

<sup>4</sup> Aerôdios is shortly after spoken of as a person or power, so that here, as elsewhere, in this literature, the *place* is called by the name of its ruler.

it, the antitype of Autogenes (Self-begotten or, perhaps, "of his own kind"). In this Place is purification in the name of Autogenes who is god over them and powers were set there over the source of the waters which they make to go forth (?). Here are the names of the powers who are set over the Water of Life: Michar and Micheu, and they are purified in the name of Barpharanges<sup>1</sup>. Within these are the Aeons of Sophia. Within these is the true Truth. And in this Place is found Pistis Sophia, as also the pre-existent Jesus the Living, Aerodios, and his Twelve Aeons<sup>2</sup>."

What is intended to be conveyed by this it is difficult to say in the absence of the context; but the Pistis Sophia mentioned is evidently the heroine of the book of that name, and the abrupt mention of her name without explanation shows, as in the *Texts of the Saviour*, that the author supposed his readers to be acquainted with her story. While this part of the Papyrus may possibly be an attempt by some later writer to fulfil the promise to tell His disciples at some future time the "emanation of the universe" frequently made by Jesus in the *Pistis Sophia*, it cannot be earlier in date than this last-named document.

Another large fragment in the Bruce Papyrus is also connected with that which has been called above the *Texts of the Saviour*, and helps to link up this with the system of the *Pistis Sophia* proper. In the first part of the *Texts of the Saviour* (i.e. the fourth document in the British Museum book), Jesus, as has been mentioned, celebrates with prodigies a sacrament which He calls the "Baptism of the first Oblation"; and He tells them at the same time that there is also a baptism of perfumes, another baptism of the Holy Spirit of Light, and a Spiritual Chrism, besides which He promises them "the great mystery

<sup>1</sup> This word constantly occurs in the Magic Papyri, generally with another word prefixed, as *σεσενγεν βαρφαραγγης* (Papyrus Mimaout, l. 12, Wessely's *Griechische Zauberpapyri*, p. 116), which C. W. King (*Gnostics and their Remains*, 2nd ed. p. 289) would translate "they who stand before the mount of Paradise" or in other words the Angels of the Presence. Amélineau (*Notices*, etc. p. 144, n. 2) will have Barpharanges to be "a hybrid word, part Chaldean and part Greek" meaning "Son of the Abyss"—which is as unlikely as the other interpretation.

<sup>2</sup> p. 143, Amélineau (*Notices*, etc.); p. 361, Schmidt, *K.-G.S.*



of the Treasure-house of Light and the way to call upon it so as to arrive thither," a "baptism of those who belong to the Right Hand," and of "those who belong to the Middle" and other matters. These promises are in some sort fulfilled in that part of the Bruce Papyrus which Dr Schmidt will have it is "the Second Book of Jeû<sup>1</sup>," where Jesus celebrates with accompanying prodigies three sacraments which He calls the Baptism of Fire of the Virgin of the Treasure-house of Light, the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, and a "mystery" which is said to take away from His disciples "the wickedness of the archons<sup>2</sup>." The details of these vary but very slightly from the "Baptism of the First Oblation" celebrated by Jesus in the *Texts of the Saviour*, and seem to have been written in continuation and as an amplification of it. But the *Texts of the Saviour*, as we have seen, also mention Pistis Sophia in such a way as to presuppose an acquaintance with her history; and the presumption that the author of the Bruce Papyrus had read the book bearing her name is confirmed by the repetition in it of the names of Jeû, here called "the Great Man, King of the great aeon of light," the Great Sabaoth the Good, the Great Iao the Good, Barbelo<sup>3</sup>, the Great Light, and all the "Amens," "Twin Saviours," "Guardians of Veils" and the rest who are classed together in the *Pistis Sophia* as the great emanations of light, and mentioned in a connection which shows them to have the same functions in all these documents<sup>4</sup>. When we add to these the repetition of the tradition, formally stated for the first time in the *Pistis Sophia*, that Jesus spent twelve years with His disciples between His Resurrection and His

<sup>1</sup> According to Amélineau, *op. cit.*, "The Book of the Great Word in Every Mystery."

<sup>2</sup> pp. 188-199, Amélineau, *op. cit.*; Schmidt, *K.-G.S.* pp. 308-314.

<sup>3</sup> pp. 219, 220, Amélineau, *op. cit.*; Schmidt, *K.-G.S.* p. 226. She seems to be here called "the Great Virgin of the Spirit." Cf. the ὕπερθε τοῦ γὰρ Αἰῶνα τινὰ ἀνώλεθρον ἐν παρθενικῇ διάγοντι πνεύματι, ὁ βαρβηλὼθ ὀνομάζονσι, "For [some of them] suppose a certain indestructible Aeon continuing in a Virgin spirit whom they call Barbelo" of Irenaeus, Bk i. c. 27, § 1, p. 222, Harvey.

<sup>4</sup> The powers named are thus called in both the *Pistis Sophia* and the Bruce Papyrus. See *Pistis Sophia*, pp. 248, 252 Copt.; Amélineau, *op. cit.* p. 177.

Ascension<sup>1</sup>, there can be little doubt that this part of the Papyrus Bruce also is subsequent to the *Pistis Sophia*. Similar arguments, which are only omitted here for the sake of greater clearness, apply to all the rest of Dr Schmidt's documents, and it follows that none of the contents of the Papyrus can be considered as any part of the "Books of Jeû" mentioned in the *Pistis Sophia*<sup>2</sup>, which, therefore, remains the parent document on which all the others are based. As to their absolute date, it seems impossible to arrive at any useful conclusion. Both M. Amélineau and Dr Schmidt are agreed that the Coptic Papyrus is a translation from Greek originals; and M. Amélineau does not put this too far forward when he suggests that it was made in the II<sup>nd</sup> and III<sup>rd</sup> century of our era<sup>3</sup>. Dr Schmidt is probably nearer the mark when he puts the actual transcription of the Papyrus as dating in the earliest instance from the v<sup>th</sup> century. His earliest date for any of the Greek originals is the first half of the III<sup>rd</sup> century<sup>4</sup>.

If now we put these later documents—the *Texts of the Saviour* and those contained in the Bruce Papyrus—side by side, we notice a marked, if gradual, change of tendency from the comparatively orthodox Christianity of the *Pistis Sophia* proper. In the *Texts of the Saviour* notably, the fear of hell and its punishments is, as we have seen, present throughout, and seems to be the sanction on which the author relies to compel his readers to accept his teaching. In the documents of the Bruce Papyrus this is also to be found in more sporadic fashion, nearly the whole of the book being occupied by the means by which men are to escape the punishment of their

<sup>1</sup> According to the *Pistis Sophia* (p. 1, Copt.), 11 years elapsed between the Crucifixion and the descent of the "Vestures" upon Jesus on the Mount of Olives. We may imagine another year to have been consumed by the revelations made in the book.

<sup>2</sup> If the "Books of Jeû" were ever written we should expect them to bear the name of Enoch, who is said to have taken them down in Paradise at the dictation of Jesus. See p. 147, n. 5, *supra*. Very possibly the expression really does refer to some of the mass of literature once passing under the name of Enoch and now lost to us.

<sup>3</sup> Amélineau, *op. cit.* p. 72.

<sup>4</sup> Schmidt, *K.-G.S.* p. 26.

sins. These methods of salvation are all of them what we have earlier called gnostical or magical, and consist simply in the utterance of "names" given us in some sort of cryptographic form, and the exhibition of "seals" or rather impressions (*χαρακτῆρες*) here portrayed with great attention to detail, which, however, remain utterly meaningless for us. Thus to quote again from what Dr Schmidt calls the Second Book of Jeû, Jesus imparts to His disciples the "mystery" of the Twelve Aeons in these words:

"When you have gone forth from the body and come into the First Aeon, the Archons of that Aeon will come before you. Then stamp upon yourselves this seal \*\*, the name of which is zôzesê. Utter this once only. Take in your two hands this number, 1119. When you have stamped upon yourselves this seal and have uttered its name once only, speak these defences; 'Back! Protei Persomphôn Chous, O Archons of the First Aeon, for I invoke Êazazêôzazzôzeôz.' And when the Archons of the First Aeon shall hear that name, they will be filled with great fear, they will flee away to the West, to the Left Hand, and you will enter in<sup>1</sup>":

and the same process with different names and seals is to be repeated with the other eleven aeons. This is, of course, not religion, such as we have seen in the writings of Valentinus, nor even the transcendental mysticism of the *Pistis Sophia*, but magic, and magic of a peculiarly Egyptian form. The ancient Egyptian had always an intense fear of the world after death, and from the first conceived a most gloomy view of it. The worshippers of Seker or Socharis, a god so ancient that we know him only as a component part of the triune or syncretic divinity of late dynastic times called Ptah-Seker-Osiris, depicted it as a subterranean place deprived of the light of the sun, hot and thirsty, and more dreary than even the Greek Hades or the Hebrew Sheol.

"The West is a land of sleep and darkness heavy, a place where those who settle in it, slumbering in their forms, never wake to see their brethren; they never look any more on their father and their mother, their heart leaves hold of their wives and children.

<sup>1</sup> Amélineau, *op. cit.* p. 211; Schmidt, *K.-G.S.* p. 322. The West or Amenti is the Egyptian name for Hades.

The living water which earth has for every one there, is foul here where I am ; though it runs for every one who is on earth, foul is for me the water which is with me. I do not know any spot where I would like to be, since I reached this valley ! Give me water which runs towards me, saying to me, ' Let thy jug never be without water ' ; bring to me the north wind, on the brink of water, that it may fan me, that my heart may cool from its pain. The god whose name is *Let Complete Death Come*, when he has summoned anybody to him, they come to him, their hearts disturbed by the fear of him ; for there is nobody dares look up to him from amongst gods and men, the great are to him as the small and he spares not [those] who love him, but he tears the nursling from the mother as he does the old man, and everyone who meets him is filled with affright<sup>1</sup>."

The priests took care that such a picture did not fade from want of reproduction and, true to the genius of their nation, elaborated it until its main features are almost lost to us under the mass of details<sup>2</sup>. Especially was this the case with the religion of the Sun-God Ra, who after his fusion with Amon of Thebes at the establishment of the New Empire came to overshadow all the Egyptian cults save that of Osiris. The tombs of the kings at Thebes are full of pictures of the land of this Amenti or the West, in which horror is piled upon horror, and book after book was written that there should be no mistake about the fate lying in wait for the souls of men<sup>3</sup>. In these we see the dead wandering from one chamber to another, breathing a heavy and smoke-laden air<sup>4</sup>, and confronted at every step by frightful fiends compounded from the human and bestial forms, whose office is to mutilate, to burn, and to torture the soul. The means of escape open to the dead was, under the xxth dynasty, neither the consciousness of a well-spent life nor the fatherly love of the gods, but the knowledge of passwords and mysterious names<sup>5</sup>. Every chamber had a guardian who demanded of the dead his own

<sup>1</sup> Maspero, "Egyptian Souls and their Worlds," *Ét. Égyptol.* i. p. 395.

<sup>2</sup> Maspero, "Hypogées Royaux," *Ét. Égyptol.* t. II. pp. 148, 165.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 178, 179.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* p. 31.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 14-15.

name, without repeating which the soul was not allowed to enter<sup>1</sup>. Every fiend had to be repelled by a special exorcism and talisman<sup>2</sup>, and every "circle" through which the dead passed had its own song and "mystery," which it behoved the dead to know<sup>3</sup>. Only thus could he hope to win through to the Land of Osiris, where he might enjoy a relative beatitude and be free to go about and visit the other heavenly places<sup>4</sup>. For this purpose, the map, so to speak, of the route was engraved on the walls of the tombs of those who could afford it, and the necessary words to be said written down. Those who were not so rich or so lucky were thought to be parcelled out, like the *fellahin* of that day, or the *villeins* of feudal times, in colonies among the different districts of the lower world, where they flourished or perished according to the number of talismans or "protections" that they possessed<sup>5</sup>. "If ever," says M. Maspero, "there were in Pharaonic Egypt mysteries and initiates, as there were in Greece and in Egypt under the Greeks, these books later than the *Book of the Other World* and the *Book of the Gates* are books of mystery and of initiates<sup>6</sup>." Thereafter, he goes on to say, the ancient popular religion disappeared more and more from Egypt, to give place to the overmastering sense of the terrors of death<sup>7</sup> and the magical means by which it was sought to lighten them.

It is to the survival of these ideas that books like the *Texts of the Saviour* and those in the Papyrus Bruce must be attributed. The Gnostic Christianity of Valentinus, direct descendant as it was of the amalgam of Christianity with pre-Christian faiths which the Ophites had compounded, no sooner reached the great mass of the Egyptian people than it found itself under their influence. In this later Gnostic literature we hear no more of the Supreme Father of Valentinus, "who alone"

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.* p. 166. To make things more difficult, the guardian sometimes had a different name for every hour. Cf. *ibid.* p. 168.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 124, n. 2, 163. For the talismans or amulets, see Maspero, "La Table d'Offrandes," *R.H.R.* t. xxxv. (1897), p. 325.

<sup>3</sup> Maspero, "Hyp. Roy." pp. 113, 118.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 162, 163.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 41, 163.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.* p. 178.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.* p. 179.

in his words, "is good"; no more weight is laid upon the Faith, Hope, and Love who were the first three members of his Heavenly Man; and the Jesus in whom were summed up all the perfections of the Godhead becomes transformed into a mere mystagogue or revealer of secret words and things. All expectation of the immediate arrival of the Parusia or Second Coming, when the world is to be caught up and all wickedness to be destroyed, has passed into the background, as has also the millennium in which the faithful were, in accordance with a very early belief in Egypt, to share the felicity of those who had been kings on earth<sup>1</sup>. Instead we have only appeals to the lowest motives of fear and the selfish desire to obtain higher privileges than ordinary men. Even the avoidance of crime has no other sanction, and complete withdrawal from the world is advocated on merely prudential grounds; while rejection of the mysteries is the unpardonable sin:

"When I have gone unto the light" (says the Jesus of the *Texts of the Saviour* to His disciples) "preach unto the whole world, saying: Renounce the whole world and the matter that is therein, all its cares, its sins, and in a word all its conversation, that ye may be worthy of the mysteries of the light, that ye may be saved from all the torments which are in the judgments. Renounce murmuring, that ye may be worthy of the mysteries of the light, that ye may escape the judgment of that dog-faced one.... Renounce wrath, that ye may be worthy of the mysteries of the light, that ye may be saved from the fire of the seas of the dragon-faced one.... Renounce adultery, that ye may be worthy of the mysteries of the kingdom of light, that ye may be saved from the seas of sulphur and pitch of the lion-faced one..... Say unto them that abandon the doctrines of truth of the First Mystery 'Woe unto you, for your torment shall be worse than that of all

<sup>1</sup> The kings, according to a belief which was evidently very old in the time of the Pyramid-Builders, were supposed to possess immortality as being gods even in their lifetime. Later, the gift was extended to rulers of nomes and other rich men, and finally to all those who could purchase the spells that would assure it. In Maspero's words "La vie d'au delà n'était pas un droit pour l'Égyptien: il pouvait la gagner par la vertu des formules et des pratiques, mais il pouvait aussi bien la perdre, et s'il était pauvre ou isolé, les chances étaient qu'il la perdit à bref délai" (*op. cit.* p. 174).

men, for ye shall dwell in the great ice and frost and hail in the midst of the Dragon of the Outer Darkness, and ye shall escape no more from the world from that hour unto evermore, but ye shall be as stones therein, and in the dissolution of the universe ye shall be annihilated, so that ye exist no more for ever<sup>1</sup>’.”

The priests who engraved the horrors of the next world on the walls of the royal tombs at Thebes would probably have written no differently.

Gnosticism then, in Egypt soon relapsed into the magic from which it was originally derived; and we can no longer wonder that the Fathers of the Church strove as fiercely against it as they did. In the age when books like the *Texts of the Saviour* and the fragments in the Papyrus Bruce could be written, the methods of Clement of Alexandria, who treated Valentinus and his school as Christians bent on the truth though led into error by a misunderstanding of the purport of heathen philosophy, were clearly out of place. “Ravaging wolves,” “wild beasts,” “serpents,” and “lying rogues” are some of the terms the Fathers now bestow upon them<sup>2</sup>, and as soon as the conversion of Constantine put the sword of the civil power into their hands, they used it to such effect that Gnosticism perished entirely in some places and in others dragged on a lingering existence under other forms. The compromise that had served for some time to reconcile the great mass of the unthinking people to the religion of Christ thus broke down<sup>3</sup>; and Egypt again showed her power of

<sup>1</sup> p. 254, Copt.

<sup>2</sup> de Faye (*Intro. etc.* p. 110) shows clearly, not only that the aims and methods of the school of Valentinus changed materially after its founder's death, but that it was only then that the Catholic Church perceived the danger of them, and set to work to combat them systematically.

<sup>3</sup> To thinkers like Dean Inge (*Christian Mysticism*, 1899, p. 82) this was the natural and appointed end of Gnosticism, which according to him was “rotten before it was ripe.” “It presents,” he says, “all the features which we shall find to be characteristic of degenerate mysticism. Not to speak of its oscillations between fanatical austerities and scandalous licence, and its belief in magic and other absurdities, we seem, when we read Irenaeus' description of a Valentinian heretic, to hear the voice of Luther venting his contempt upon some *Geisterer* of the sixteenth century.” It

resisting and transforming all ideas other than those which thousands of years had made sacred to her people.

Meanwhile, the bridge between Paganism and Christianity which Gnosticism afforded had been crossed by many. As the Ophites showed the inhabitants of Asia Minor how to combine the practice of their ancestral worships with the Christian revelation, so Valentinus and his successors allowed the rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven without the difficulties attendant on the passage of the camel through the needle's eye. The authors of the *Pistis Sophia* and the Bruce Papyrus went further and made it possible for the Egyptian *fellah*—then as now hating change, and most tenacious of his own beliefs—to accept the hope of salvation offered by the new faith while giving up none of his traditional lore upon the nature of the next world. In this way, doubtless, many thousands were converted to Christianity who would otherwise have kept aloof from it, and thus hastened its triumph over the State. But the law which seems to compel every religion to borrow the weapons of its adversaries leads sometimes to strange results, and this was never more plainly marked than in the case of Egypt. The history of Egyptian Christianity has yet to be written; but it seems from the first to have been distinguished in many important particulars from that which conquered the West, and it is impossible to attribute these differences to any other source than Gnosticism. The Pharaonic Egyptian had always been fanatical, submissive like all Africans to priestly influence, and easily absorbed in concern for his own spiritual welfare. Given the passion for defining the undefinable and the love of useless detail which marked everything in the old faith, and in systems like those of the Coptic texts which form the subject of this chapter he had the religion to his mind. Nor were other and less abstract considerations wanting. The life of a scribe or temple servant, as the race began to lose the vigour which at one time had made them the conquerors of Asia, had come to be looked upon

may be so; yet, after all, Gnosticism in its later developments lasted for a longer time than the doctrines of Luther have done, particularly in the land of their birth.



by the mass of the people as that which was most desirable on earth<sup>1</sup>; and here was a faith which called upon the Egyptian to withdraw from the world and devote himself to the care of his own soul. Hence the appeal of Gnosticism to those who would escape hell to renounce all earthly cares fell upon good ground, and Egypt was soon full of ignorant ascetics withdrawn from the life of labour and spending their days in ecstasy or contemplation until roused to seditious or turbulent action at the bidding of their crafty and ambitious leaders. For these monks and hermits the Hellenistic civilization might as well not have existed; but they preserved their native superstitions without much modification, and the practices of magic, alchemy, and divination were rife among them<sup>2</sup>. So, too, was the constant desire to enquire into the nature and activities of the Deity which they had brought with them from their old faith, and which nearly rent Christianity in twain when it found expression in the Arian, the Monophysite, and the Monothelite controversies. In the meantime, the Catholic Church had profoundly modified her own methods in the directions which the experience of the Gnostics had shown to be profitable. The fear of hell came to occupy a larger and larger part in her exhortations, and apocalypse after apocalypse was put forth in which its terrors were set out with abundant detail. Ritual necessarily became of immense importance under the pressure of converts who believed in the magical efficacy of prayers and sacraments, in which every word and every gesture was of mysterious import, and the rites of the Church were regarded more and more as secrets on which only those fully instructed might look. The use in them of pictures, flowers, incense, music, and all the externals of the public worship of heathen times, which according to Gibbon would have shocked a Tertullian or a Lactantius could they have returned to earth<sup>3</sup>, must be attributed in the first instance

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Maspero, *Life in Ancient Egypt and Assyria*, Eng. ed. 1892, pp. 90-92, for the distaste of the Egyptians of Ramesside times for the life of a soldier and their delight in that of a scribe.

<sup>2</sup> All these, especially alchemy, are illustrated in the Magic Papyrus of Leyden known as W. See Leemans, *Pap. Gr.* t. II. pp. 83 sqq.

<sup>3</sup> Gibbon, *Decline and Fall*, vol. III. p. 214, Bury's ed.

to the influence of Gnostic converts. Renan is doubtless right when he says that it was over the bridge between Paganism and Christianity formed by Gnosticism that many Pagan practices poured into the Church<sup>1</sup>.

Apart from these external matters, on the other hand, the outbreak of Gnosticism possibly rendered a real service to Christianity. To the simple chiliastic faith of Apostolic times, the Gnostics added the elements which transformed it into a world-religion, fitted to triumph over all the older creeds and worships; and their stealthy and in part secret opposition forced the Church to adopt the organization which has enabled her to survive in unimpaired strength to the present day. Jewish Christianity, the religion of the few pious and humble souls who thought they had nothing to do but to wait in prayer and hope for their Risen Lord, had proved itself unable to conquer the world, and its adherents under the name of Ebionites were already looked upon by the Gentile converts as heretics. Gnosticism, so long as it was unchecked, was a real danger to the Church, but without it Christendom would probably have broken up into hundreds of small independent communities, and would thus have dissipated the strength which she eventually found in unity. Threatened on the one hand by this danger, and on the other with the loss of popular favour which the attractions of Gnosticism made probable, the Church was forced to organize herself, to define her doctrines, to establish a regular and watchful hierarchy<sup>2</sup>, and to strictly regulate the tendency to mystic speculation and arbitrary exegesis which she could not wholly suppress. Yet these measures could not come into operation without producing a reaction, the end of which we have yet to see.

<sup>1</sup> Renan, *L'Église Chrétienne*, pp. 154, 155, and authorities there quoted. Cf. Hatch, *H. L.* pp. 129, 130, 293, 307-309.

<sup>2</sup> Harnack, *What is Christianity?* p. 210; Duchesne, *Early Christian Church*, p. 32.

## CHAPTER XI

### MARCION

WE have seen that Valentinus left Alexandria to settle in Rome before promulgating his new doctrine<sup>1</sup>, and the Eternal City seems at that time to have drawn to itself as with a magnet all those Oriental teachers of Christianity who wished to make innovation in religion. Rome in the II<sup>nd</sup> century had become a veritable sink into which poured men of all nations and creeds whether old or new. Besides the great flood of Isiacists, Mithraists, and worshippers of the Great Goddess and of the Syrian Baals, that now began to appear there, Alexander of Abonoteichos came thither under Marcus Aurelius to celebrate his newly-invented mysteries<sup>2</sup>, and succeeded in gaining a foothold at the Imperial Court. Moreover in A.D. 140, the terrible war of extermination which Hadrian had been compelled much against his will to wage against the Jewish nation was at length over, and the effect of this was to transfer a great number of Asiatic and African Christians to the world's metropolis, while making it more than ever expedient for them to disclaim connection with the Jews. The slightly contemptuous toleration, too, which the statesmanlike Hadrian seems to have extended to the Christians<sup>3</sup>, was not likely to be withdrawn without reason by his philosophic successor, Antoninus Pius; and it was doubtless the consciousness of this which led to the appearance of the various "apologies" for, or defences of, Christianity which Quadratus, Aristides, Justin Martyr, and other persons with some philosophic training now began to put forth. In such of these as have come down to us, the desire

<sup>1</sup> Chap. IX. p. 118 *supra*.

<sup>2</sup> Renan, *Marc Aurèle*, p. 49. Cf. Dill, *Nero to Marcus*, pp. 473-477.

<sup>3</sup> Renan, *L'Église Chrétienne*, pp. 31-33, and Hadrian's letter there quoted.

of their authors to dissociate themselves from the Jews, then at the nadir of their unpopularity, is plainly manifest, and no doubt gave the note to the innovators<sup>1</sup>. It is certainly very marked in the heresy of Marcion, which, unlike those of Valentinus and the other Gnostics, was to culminate in the setting-up of a schismatic Church in opposition to that founded on the Apostles.

Marcion was, according to the better account, a wealthy shipowner of Pontus and probably a convert to Christianity<sup>2</sup>. He seems to have been born at Sinope, at one time the most important of the Greek towns on the Southern shore of the Euxine or Black Sea. Mithridates the Great, who was also born there, had made Sinope his capital, and though it had no doubt declined in rank since his time, it must still have been, in the year 100 A.D. (the probable date of Marcion's birth), a flourishing and prosperous place<sup>3</sup>. As in all the cities of Asia Minor, the Stoic philosophy had there obtained a firm hold, and there is some reason for thinking that Marcion received lessons in this before his conversion<sup>4</sup>. Of the circumstances which led to this event we have no knowledge, and it was even said in later times that he was born a Christian, and that his father had been a bishop of the Church. A better founded story is that, on his conversion, he brought into the common fund of the Church a considerable sum of money, which is said to have been paid out to him on his expulsion<sup>5</sup>. When at the

<sup>1</sup> Of the defences mentioned in the text the Apology of Quadratus is the only one still lost to us. Justin Martyr's two Apologies are among the best known of patristic works. That of Aristides was found by Dr Rendel Harris in a Syriac MS. in 1889. For the identification of this by Dean Armitage Robinson with the story of Barlaam and Josaphat, see *Cambridge Texts and Studies*, vol. I. No. 1.

<sup>2</sup> The account of Marcion's life given by Salmon (s.v. Marcion) in the *Dict. Christian Biog.* is here mostly followed. Abundant references to the Fathers and other sources are there given.

<sup>3</sup> Tertullian's talk (*adv. Marcion.* Bk I. c. 1) about its barbarism and the natives living in waggons is mere rhetoric. He probably knew nothing about the place.

<sup>4</sup> *Stoicæ studiosus.* Tertullian, *de Praescript.* c. xxx.

<sup>5</sup> *Id. adv. Marc.* Bk IV. c. 4; and *de Praescript.* c. xxx., where the money is said to have been 200 sestertia or nearly £1800.

mature age of forty he went to Rome, it seems reasonable to suppose that he accepted the orthodox teaching, as it is said that there was some talk of his being made bishop of what was even then the richest and highest in rank of all the Christian Churches. At Rome, however, he fell in with one Cerdo, a Syrian, who seems to have been already domiciled there and to have taught in secret a pronouncedly dualistic system in which God and Matter were set in sharp opposition to one another, and in which it was held that a good God could not have been the author of this wicked world<sup>1</sup>. This opinion Marcion adopted and elaborated, with the result that he was expelled from the Catholic Church, and thereupon set to work to found another, having bishops, priests, deacons, and other officers in close imitation of the community he had left<sup>2</sup>. It is said that before his death he wished to be reconciled to the Church, but was told that he could only be readmitted when he had restored to the fold the flock that he had led away from it. This, on the authority of Tertullian, he would have been willing to do ; but his rival Church had by that time so enormously increased in numbers, that he died, probably in 165 A.D., before he was able to make the restitution required<sup>3</sup>. This story also can only be accepted with a great deal of reserve<sup>4</sup>.

It is abundantly plain, however, that Marcion was regarded not only by the professed heresiologists of the succeeding age, but also by teachers like Justin Martyr and the learned Clement of Alexandria, as one of the most formidable enemies of the Church, whose evil influence persisted even after his death<sup>5</sup>. By the reign of Gratian, his rival Church had spread over Italy, Egypt, Palestine, Arabia, Syria, and Persia<sup>6</sup>; and, although the main authority for the increase is the always doubtful one

<sup>1</sup> Tertullian, *adv. Marc.* Bk I. c. 2. Cf. Pseudo Tertullianus, *adv. omn. Haer.* c. xvi.

<sup>2</sup> Neander, *Ch. Hist.* II. p. 150; cf. Tertullian, *de Praescript.* c. xli.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid. op. cit.* c. xxx. Salmon (*Dict. Christian Biog.* s.v. Marcion) wishes to transfer this story to Cerdo.

<sup>4</sup> Neander, *Church Hist.* II. p. 139, disbelieves it.

<sup>5</sup> Justin Martyr, *First Apol.* cc. xxvi., lviii. He writes as Marcion's contemporary. Cf. Clem. Alex. *Strom.* Bk III. c. 3.

<sup>6</sup> Epiphanius, *Haer.* xlii. p. 553, Oehler.

of Epiphanius, this last was not likely to have unduly magnified the success of the Church's rival, and his story has the confirmation of Tertullian that in his time the Marcionites made churches "as wasps make nests<sup>1</sup>." Every Father of note seems to have written against the heresiarch who had thus dared, as was said, to turn away souls from Christ, and Polycarp, the saint and martyr, when Marcion claimed acquaintance with him in Rome on the strength of a former meeting in Smyrna, replied with much heat, "Yes, I know thee! the first-born of Satan<sup>2</sup>." So late as the Council in Trullo in the VIIIth century, special arrangements had to be made for the reception of Marcionites who wished to be reconciled to the Church, and forms of abjuration of the sect are said to have lingered until the xth<sup>3</sup>.

That this longevity was purchased by no willingness to make the best of both worlds or to enjoy peace by compromising with heathenism in the way we have seen prevalent among the Alexandrian Gnostics, is at once evident. Alone among the heretics of the sub-Apostolic Age, the Fathers declare, the Marcionites held fast their faith in time of persecution, while they refused to frequent the circus and the theatre and practised an austerity of life putting to shame even the ascetics among the orthodox<sup>4</sup>. Marcion himself underwent none of the slanders on his personal morals which theologians generally heap upon their opponents<sup>5</sup>, and none of his tenets are said by either Tertullian or Epiphanius, who took his refutation most seriously in hand, to have been borrowed from those Pagan rites or mysteries which they looked upon as forming the most shameful

<sup>1</sup> Tertullian, *adv. Marc.* Bk IV. c. 5.

<sup>2</sup> Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.* Bk IV. c. 14.

<sup>3</sup> The council was held 692 A.D. See Salmon in *Dict. Christian Biog.* s.v. Marcion.

<sup>4</sup> Tertullian, *adv. Marc.* Bk I. c. 27.

<sup>5</sup> The story that he seduced a virgin is now generally held to mean merely that he corrupted the unsullied faith of the Church. Cf. Hegesippus in Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.* Bk V. c. 22. So Salmon, *art. cit. supra*. As Neander points out (*Ch. Hist.* II. p. 136 note), Tertullian, had he known the story, would certainly have published it. Yet he contrasts Marcion's chastity with the real or supposed incontinence of his follower, Apelles (*de Praescript.* c. XXX.).

source from which to contaminate the pure doctrine of the Church. Irenaeus, who was his junior by some twenty or thirty years, and may have known him personally, says indeed that he was a disciple of Simon Magus<sup>1</sup>, but in this he may have alluded merely to his position as the founder of a rival Church. Hippolytus is silent about this; but, true to his system of attacking philosophy on account of its supposed connection with heresy, says that Marcion is a disciple, not of Christ, but of Empedocles<sup>2</sup>. There is much to be said for the view that Marcion's heresy was so well and firmly established before the end of the II<sup>nd</sup> century, that those who then denounced it really knew little of its beginnings<sup>3</sup>. They are, however, unanimous as to the more than Puritanical attitude adopted by its founders. The Marcionites were allowed neither to drink wine nor to eat flesh, and those believers in their tenets who were married had either to separate from their wives or to remain among the catechumens until about to die, it being unlawful for them to receive baptism save on their deathbeds<sup>4</sup>.

Marcion's, indeed, seems to have been one of those ruggedly logical and uncompromising natures, not to be led away by reverence for authority or tradition, which appear once or twice in the history of most religions; and it is doubtless this quality which has led Prof. Harnack, as did Neander in the last century, to claim him as the first reformer of the Catholic Church<sup>5</sup>. Like another Luther, Marcion declared that the Church had become corrupted by the additions made by men to the pure teaching she had received from her Founder, and that only in return to her primitive faith was safety to be found. For this primitive faith, he appealed, like the makers of the German Reformation, to the words of Scripture, but he differed from them most widely in the limitations that he placed upon them. It was, he declared, impossible to find any attributes

<sup>1</sup> Irenaeus, Bk I. c. 25, p. 219, Harvey.

<sup>2</sup> Hippolytus, *op. cit.* Bk VII. c. 3, p. 370, Cruice.

<sup>3</sup> So Salmon, *art. cit.*, Renan, and others. This view, however, cannot apply to Justin Martyr who was, as we have seen, his contemporary. See n. 5. p. 205 *supra*.

<sup>4</sup> See Salmon (*Dict. Christian Biog. s.v. Marcion*) for authorities.

<sup>5</sup> See Harnack's article on *Marcion* in *Encyc. Brit.* (11th ed.).

in common between the God of the Old Testament and the Supreme (and benevolent) Being of whom Jesus announced Himself the Son, and he therefore rejected the Old Testament entirely. In the same way, he said that the Canonical Gospels then received among Christians had become overlaid with Jewish elements introduced by the Asiatic converts among whom they were first circulated; and that the narrative in the Gospel according to Luke was alone trustworthy<sup>1</sup>. From this also, he removed the whole series of traditions concerning the Birth and Infancy of Jesus; and made it begin in effect with the words of the fourth chapter in which is described the coming-down of Jesus to "Capernaum, a city of Galilee." These he combined with the opening words of Luke iii., so that the event was described as taking place in the "fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar<sup>2</sup>." He also excised from the Gospel everything which could indicate any respect shown by the Founder of Christianity to the Torah or Law of the Jews, the allusions to the Jewish traditions concerning Jonah and the Queen of Sheba, the supposed fulfilment of the Jewish prophecies in the person and acts of Jesus, and the statement that He took part in the Paschal Feast. He further removed from it every passage which represents Jesus as drinking wine or taking part in any festivity, and in the Lord's Prayer he struck out the petition for delivery from evil, while modifying the "Hallowed be thy name!" It has been suggested that in this last case he may have given us an older version than that of the Canon<sup>3</sup>.

With the remainder of the New Testament, Marcion took similar liberties. He rejected entirely the *Acts of the Apostles*, The Apocalypse of St John, the *Epistle to the Hebrews*, and the Epistles generally called "Pastoral," as well as all those passing under the names of St John, St James, St Peter and St Jude.

<sup>1</sup> Tertullian, *adv. Marc.* Bk iv. c. 2. Marcion apparently knew nothing of St John's Gospel, which may not have become public till after his death. Had he done so, as Renan says (*L'Égl. Chrétienne*, p. 71), he would probably have preferred it to any other, because of its markedly anti-Jewish tendency.

<sup>2</sup> According to him, Jesus was not born of woman. Cf. Hippolytus, *op. cit.* Bk vii. c. 31, pp. 383-384, Cruice.

<sup>3</sup> The whole controversy is well summed up in Matter, *Hist. du Gnost.* t. ii. pp. 238-242.



For the Apostle Paul, however, Marcion had a profound admiration, pronouncing him to be the only true follower of Jesus, and he accepted with some alterations the ten epistles which he thought could with confidence be attributed to him. These were the Epistles to the Galatians, the two to the Corinthians, the one to the Romans, both those to the Thessalonians, that to the Ephesians or, as he preferred to call it, to the Laodiceans, and those to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Philippians. From these ten epistles, he removed everything which described the fulfilment of the prophecies of the Jewish prophets, all allusions to the Parusia or Second Coming, and some expressions which seemed to him to militate against the asceticism that he himself favoured<sup>1</sup>. All these alterations seem to have been set down by Marcion in a book to which he gave the name of the *Antitheses*, and which contained his statement of the incongruities apparent between the Old and New Testaments. This book is now lost, and the details of Marcion's emendations have in consequence to be picked out from the treatise of Tertullian against him, the statements of Epiphanius, and the anonymous discourse *de Recta Fide* which is sometimes included in the works of Origen<sup>2</sup>.

If these alterations of the Scriptures generally received depended on any independent tradition, or even upon a rational criticism, they would be of the greatest use to modern textual critics, who have in consequence hoped eagerly that some lucky chance might yet give us a copy of Marcion's Gospel<sup>3</sup>. But the Fathers make no allusion to any claim of the kind; and in the absence of Marcion's own words, it seems likely that his alterations were merely dictated by the preoccupation regarding the Divine nature which seems with him to have amounted to a passion. Never, he said, could the jealous and irascible God

<sup>1</sup> See Matter, *op. cit.* t. II. pp. 246-260, where Marcion's emendations are given chapter by chapter and their sources cited.

<sup>2</sup> Hahn, in his *Antitheses Marcionis gnostici*, Königsberg, 1823, claimed to have restored this book, while Hilgenfeld has examined the extant remains of Marcion's Gospel in *Das Evangelium Marcions*. He attempted to restore Marcion's *Apostolicon* in the *Zeitschr. für hist. Theol.* 1855.

<sup>3</sup> The *Antitheses* seem to have been seen by Photius in the xth century, so that we need not despair.

of the Jews be identified with the loving and benevolent Spirit whom Jesus called His Father. Hence there was not one God ; but two Gods. One of these was the Supreme Being, perfect in power as in goodness, whose name, as perhaps the Orphics and the Ophites taught, was Love<sup>1</sup>. Too great to concern Himself with sublunary things, and too pure, as Plato and Philo had both said, to have any dealings with an impure and sinful world, He remained seated apart in the third or highest heaven, inaccessible to and unapproachable by man, like the unknown Father of Valentinus and the other Gnostic sects<sup>2</sup>. Below Him was the Creator, or rather the Demiurge or Fashioner of the World, in constant conflict with matter, which he is always trying unsuccessfully to conquer and subdue in accordance with his own limited and imperfect ideas. Just, according to Marcion, was the Demiurge, whom he identified with the God of the Jews ; and it was this attribute of justice which prevented him from being considered wholly evil in his nature, as was Satan, the active agent of the matter with which the Demiurge was always striving. Yet the Demiurge was the creator of evil on his own showing<sup>3</sup>, and as such is entitled to no adoration from man, whom he has brought into a world full of evil. Man's rescue from this is due to the Supreme God, who sent His Son Jesus Christ on earth that He might reveal to mankind His Heavenly Father, and thus put an end to the sway of the Demiurge.

That Jesus on His coming was seized and slain by the Jews, with at least the connivance of the Demiurge, Marcion admitted. But as this might seem like a defeat of the Supreme Being by His inferior, he was forced to accept the theory called Docetism which was in favour with many other Gnostics. According to this, the body of Jesus was not real flesh and blood, and had

<sup>1</sup> Like the Eros-Phanes of the Orphics and the Ophite Agape. So Pausanias, Bk IX. c. 27, says the Lycomidae sang in the Mysteries hymns to Eros, which he had read, thanks to a *δαδούχος* or torch-bearer at Eleusis.

<sup>2</sup> Tertullian, *adv. Marc.* Bk I. c. 2, says that Marcion is obliged to admit the existence of a Creator, because his work is manifest ; but that he will never be able to prove that of a higher God than he—a mode of reasoning which might take him further than he intends.

<sup>3</sup> Isaiah, xlv. 7.

indeed no actual existence, but was a phantasm which only appeared to mankind in the likeness of a man<sup>1</sup>. Hence it mattered nothing that this body, which did not really exist, appeared to suffer, to be slain, and even to rise again. The Supreme God was not mocked, and the resurrection of the body was to Marcion a thing unthinkable.

In lesser matters, Marcion's dislike of the God of the Jews is, perhaps, more marked. Man's body, according to him, was made by the Demiurge out of matter<sup>2</sup>, but without any spark from a higher world infused into it, as the Ophites and Valentinus had taught. Hence man was naturally inclined to evil, and the Law which the Demiurge delivered to him was more or less of a snare. Man was sure to give way to the evil desires inherent in matter, and on doing so became with all his race subject to the power of matter and the evil spirits inhabiting it. It is true that the Demiurge had devised a plan of salvation in the shape of the Law of the Jews delivered to them on Sinai. But this concerned one small people only, and it was but a fraction of that community which could hope to observe it in all its forms and ceremonies. Did they do so, the Demiurge would provide for them a modified felicity in that region of Hades called the Bosom of Abraham<sup>3</sup>. For those Gentiles, and even for those Jews who from weakness or obstinacy did not obey the Law, he had prepared punishment and, apparently, eternal tortures. It is true that he promised the Jews a Messiah who should lead them to the conquest of the earth, but this leader certainly was not Jesus<sup>4</sup>; and it is probable that Marcion thought that His Mission had put it out of the power of the Demiurge to fulfil any of these promises.

Possibly it was the same dislike of the Jews that led Marcion to consider St Paul as the only real apostle of Jesus. The others, he said, had overlaid the faith that they had received with Jewish traditions; but Paul, chosen by Jesus after His Ascension<sup>5</sup>, had resisted their attempt to reintroduce the Law of the Jews, and was, in his own words, an apostle sent not

<sup>1</sup> Tertullian, *adv. Marc.* Bk III. c. 8.    <sup>2</sup> Neander, *Ch. Hist.* II. pp. 142 *seqq.*

<sup>3</sup> Tertullian, *adv. Marc.* Bk III. c. 24.

<sup>4</sup> *Op. cit.* Bk III. c. 4. Cf. Neander, *Ch. Hist.* II. p. 144.

<sup>5</sup> Tertullian, *op. cit.* Bk V. c. 1.

from men, nor by man, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father who raised Him from the dead<sup>1</sup>. Marcion also seems to have laid stress upon St Paul's wonder that the Galatians were "so soon removed from Him who hath called you to His grace to another Gospel<sup>2</sup>," with the suggestion that this second gospel was the contrivance of the Demiurge; and generally to have accentuated the controversy between St Peter and St Paul mentioned in the Epistle bearing their name<sup>3</sup>. From the same Epistle to the Galatians, Marcion appears to have erased the name of Abraham where his blessing is said to have "come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ<sup>4</sup>"; and in like manner, to have read into the passage in the First Epistle to the Corinthians<sup>5</sup>, where it is said that "the world by wisdom knew not God," expressions implying that it was the "Lord of this World," i.e. the Demiurge, who was ignorant of the Supreme Being<sup>6</sup>. As this ignorance of the Demiurge was a favourite theme of the Ophites and other Gnostics, it is possible that Marcion was more indebted to these predecessors of his than modern commentators on his teaching are inclined to allow; but he perhaps justified his reading by tacking it on to the passage in the Second Epistle to the Corinthians which says that "the God of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine upon them<sup>7</sup>." From the Epistle to the Romans, in which he seems to have made very large erasures<sup>8</sup>, Marcion draws further arguments in favour of his contention that the Jews were kept in ignorance of the Supreme God, relying upon texts like :

"For they [*i.e.* Israel] being ignorant of God's righteousness and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God<sup>9</sup>."

So, too, in the Second Epistle to the Thessalonians, Marcion rejects the passage which declares that Jesus shall

<sup>1</sup> Gal. i. 1. Tertullian, *adv. Marc.* Bk v., contains most of Marcion's dealings with the Pauline Epistles.

<sup>2</sup> Gal. i. 6, 7.

<sup>3</sup> Gal. ii. 11 *sqq.*

<sup>4</sup> Gal. iii. 14.

<sup>5</sup> 1 Cor. i. 21.

<sup>6</sup> Tertullian, *adv. Marc.* Bk v. c. 5.

<sup>7</sup> 2 Cor. iv. 4. Cf. Tertullian, *op. cit.* Bk v. c. 11.

<sup>8</sup> Tertullian, *op. cit.* Bk v. c. 14.

<sup>9</sup> Rom. x. 2, 3.

come "in flaming fire taking vengeance<sup>1</sup>," which he considered inconsistent with the benevolence of Himself and His Father. We do not know whom he considered to be the Antichrist there predicted, as Epiphanius leaves us in doubt whether Marcion accepted the verses which go by the name of the Little Apocalypse, but Tertullian seems to imply that Marcion may have assigned this part to the Messiah of the Demiurge<sup>2</sup>. In like manner, he is said to have altered the passage in the Epistle to the Ephesians which speaks of "the mystery which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God<sup>3</sup>," so as to make it appear that the mystery was hid not *in* God, but *from* the god who created all things, meaning thereby the Demiurge<sup>4</sup>.

Until some lucky discovery gives us the text of Marcion's *Antitheses* it is difficult to say whether he has been correctly reported by his adversaries, or whether, which is probable enough, they have suppressed evidence brought forward by him in support of these erasures and interpolations. That in putting them forward, he did so in such a way as to leave many an opening to a skilled controversialist is easy to believe, and there are many passages in Tertullian's refutation which show that his forensically-trained adversary took advantage of these with more eagerness than generosity. But the noteworthy thing about the long drawn out dialectic of Tertullian's treatise *Against Marcion*, is the way in which Marcion throughout resolutely abstains from any of the allegorical or figurative interpolations of Scripture which we have seen so prevalent among all the Gnostic writers from Simon Magus down to the authors of the *Pistis Sophia* and its connected texts. Everywhere, it would seem, he took the Biblical texts that he quotes at their literal meaning and never seems to have attempted to translate any of them by trope or figure. In like manner, we find him, so far as his adversaries' account goes, entirely free from that preoccupation concerning the divisions and order of the spiritual world which plays so large a part in the speculations of the systems hitherto described. Nor does he show any tendency to the deification of abstract ideas which is really at

<sup>1</sup> 2 Thess. i. 8. Cf. Tertullian, *op. cit.* Bk v. c. 16.

<sup>2</sup> Epiphanius, *Haer.* XLII. p. 676, Oehler; Tertullian, *loc. cit.*

<sup>3</sup> Ephes. iii. 8, 9.

<sup>4</sup> Tertullian, *op. cit.* Bk v. c. 18.

the root of all Gnostic systems whether before or after Christ. Nowhere does Marcion let fall an expression which could make us think of the Sophia or Wisdom of God as a separate entity or personified being, nor is the Logos of Plato and his Alexandrian admirers ever alluded to by him. Hence, he in no way contributes to the growth, so luxuriant in his time, of mythology and allegory<sup>1</sup>. In everything he exhibits the hard and unimaginative quality of the practical man.

These considerations have great bearing on the question of the source of his heresy. Had he busied himself, like the Gnostics, with elaborate descriptions of the invisible universe, one would have thought that he owed something to the ancient Egyptian theology, in which such speculations occupied nearly the whole care of its professors. Had he, on the other hand, studied to personify the attributes and qualities of the Supreme Being, one would have been able to connect his teaching with that of the Persian religion, in which, as will be seen in the next chapter, the idea of such personification took the principal place. This connection would have been natural enough, because the province of Pontus, whence Marcion came, had long been subject to the Persian power, and did not become Roman in name until the reign of Nero. Yet no trace of such a connection is even hinted at by adversaries perfectly well informed of the main tenets of the Persian religion<sup>2</sup>. The inference is therefore unavoidable that Marcion's views were original, and that they were formed, as was said by a critic of the last century, by a sort of centrifugal process, and after rejecting in turn all heathen and Jewish elements, as well as most of the traditions which had already grown up in the Catholic Church<sup>3</sup>. That Marcion

<sup>1</sup> But see n. 2, p. 217, *infra*.

<sup>2</sup> As is plain from the words of Plutarch quoting, as is generally thought, Theopompus of Chios. See *Is. et Os.* cc. XLVI., XLVII. Al-Bîrûnî, *Chronology*, p. 189, says indeed that both Bardesanes and Marcion borrowed from Zoroaster. But this was eight centuries after Marcion's death, and we have no evidence as to Al-Bîrûnî's means of knowledge of his tenets.

<sup>3</sup> Harvey's *Irenaeus*, I. p. cli. There is a curious resemblance to Marcion's Demiurge in the Clementine *Homilies*, xx. c. 2, where the king of this world who rules by law and rejoices in the destruction of sinners is mentioned. But the *Homilies* are probably Ebionite and certainly, in the form in which they have come down to us, later than Marcion.

was aware of this seems probable from the many efforts made by him to be reconciled to the Church, or rather to convert the whole Church to his way of thinking. In this, as in the emphasis which he laid on faith rather than knowledge as the source of man's happiness in this world and the next, he again anticipated in a most striking manner the views of the German Reformers some fourteen centuries later<sup>1</sup>.

A like analogy is to be seen in the practices of the Marcionite churches, so far at any rate as we may trust to the reports of their orthodox opponents. True, as it would seem, to his conviction of the complete failure of the scheme of the Demiurge, Marcion set his face even more sternly than our own Puritans of Cromwell's time against anything that should look like enjoyment of the things of this world<sup>2</sup>. His followers were enjoined to eat no meat, to abstain from wine even in the Eucharist, which in the Marcionite churches was celebrated with water, and to observe perpetually the strictest continence<sup>3</sup>. The Sabbath was kept by them as a fast and, although this may look like an obedience to Jewish custom, Epiphanius, who is our sole authority for the observance, tells us that Marcion expressly rejected this attribution<sup>4</sup>. Virginity was, according to him, the only state of life for the true Christian; and although he freely baptized unmarried men and eunuchs, he refused baptism to married persons, as has been said, until they were divorced or on the point of death<sup>5</sup>. To the enticements of the circus, the gladiatorial shows, and the theatre, the Marcionites used, according to Tertullian, to return the answer "God forbid!"; and they made the same reply, he tells us, when invited to save their lives in time of persecution by sacrificing a few grains of

<sup>1</sup> Neander *Antignostikus*, Eng. ed. vol. II. p. 490, calls him the representative of the Protestant spirit. In modern times, it is perhaps sufficient to notice Harnack's predilection, as shown in his *Dogmengeschichte*, for Marcion and his works. Foakes-Jackson, *Some Christian Difficulties of the Second and Twentieth Centuries* (Hulsean Lectures), Cambridge, 1903, pp. 19 *sqq.*, thinks the study of the controversy between Marcion and Tertullian should especially appeal to Modernists.

<sup>2</sup> Hippolytus, *op. cit.* Bk VII. c. 29, p. 378, Cruice.

<sup>3</sup> Epiphanius, *Haer.* XLII. p. 556, Oehler.

<sup>4</sup> *Op. et loc. cit.*

<sup>5</sup> Tertullian, *adv. Marc.* Bk IV. c. 11 Cf. p. 207, *supra*.

incense to the genius of the Emperor<sup>1</sup>. The reason of all this austerity was apparently their contempt for the kingdom of the Demiurge and their resolve to do nothing to prolong his rule.

Of the spread of the Marcionite heresy we have very little more information than that given above. Prof. Harnack thinks 150–190 A.D. was the “golden age of the Marcionites<sup>2</sup>,” but Tertullian evidently considered that some thirty years after the last of these dates they were nearly as numerous as the Valentinians, whom he speaks of as the largest sect of heretics<sup>3</sup>. An inscription found in a Syrian village refers to a “synagogue” of Marcionites occupying a site there in 318 A.D.<sup>4</sup>, which is, as has been remarked, older than the earliest dated inscription of the Catholic Church. Theodoret, too, about 440 A.D., boasts of having converted more than a thousand of them, a statement which afterwards swells into eight villages and supposes that they were pretty thickly clustered together<sup>5</sup>. Yet they must have led a miserable existence, being persecuted by the Imperial authorities and their Christian brethren at once, and it is not to be wondered at that Marcion himself addresses some followers in a letter quoted by Tertullian as “my partners in hate and wretchedness<sup>6</sup>.” It speaks volumes for their faith that they continued to hold it in spite of everything.

This was the more to their credit that they were by no means at one in matters of belief. In a passage quoted in a former chapter, Tertullian says that the Marcionites thought it fair to do what Marcion had done, that is, to innovate on the faith according to their own pleasure. This is a rhetorical way of putting it; for the successors of Marcion seem to have differed

<sup>1</sup> Tertullian, *op. cit.* Bk i. c. 27.

<sup>2</sup> Harnack in *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (11th ed.) s.v. “Marcion.”

<sup>3</sup> He always couples Valentinus and Marcion together. Cf. *de Praescript.* cc. xxix., xxx. Justin Martyr, Marcion’s contemporary, says (*First Apolog.* c. xxvi.) that “he is even now teaching men of every nation to speak blasphemies.” Renan, *L’Égl. Chrétienne*, p. 363, thinks that the Marcionites were “much the most numerous sect before Arius.”

<sup>4</sup> Foakes-Jackson, *Hulsean Lectures*, p. 108. Cf. Sanday, *The Gospels in the 2nd Cent.*, Oxford, 1876, p. 236.

<sup>5</sup> Theodoret, *Epp.* 113 and 145.

<sup>6</sup> *συμμυσούμενοι καὶ συνταλαίπαροι*: Tertullian, *adv. Marc.* Bk iv. cc. 9, 30.



among themselves mainly upon one point, which was, in fact, the number of "principles" which lay at the beginning of things<sup>1</sup>. Thanks to his Stoical training, Marcion was forced to assign a large part in the formation of the cosmos to Matter, which he nevertheless thought to be essentially evil. But in that case, how did it come into existence? It surely could not be the creation of the Supreme and benevolent Being whose name was Love; and if not, how did it come to exist independently of Him? To these questions it is possible that the essentially practical genius of Marcion saw no need to return any answer, and was content to regard them, like Epicurus before him, as insoluble problems. But his followers apparently refused to do so; and hence there arose considerable diversity of opinion. According to an Armenian author of late date, Marcion himself taught that there were *three* principles, that is, the Supreme God, the Demiurge or Creator, and Matter, which he regarded as a sort of spouse to the Demiurge<sup>2</sup>. This, however,

<sup>1</sup> See Neander, *Ch. Hist.* vol. II. pp. 151 *sqq.* and Matter, *Hist. du Gnost.* t. II. pp. 298, 304.

<sup>2</sup> Eznig of Gogh, from whose History of the Armenian Church quotation has been made above. He says that Marcion taught that there were three heavens, in the highest of which dwelt the Good God, in the next the God of the (Jewish) Law, and in the third his angels. Below this lay Hyle or Matter who existed independently and was female. From the union of the God of the Law and Hyle, this earth was produced, after which its Father retired to his own heaven, leaving the earth to the rule of Hyle. When he desired to make man, Hyle supplied the dust of which he was formed, into which the God of the Law breathed his own spirit. Adam became the adorer of Hyle, upon which the God of the Law informed him that, if he worshipped any other God but him, he should die. On this Adam withdrew from Hyle, and this last, becoming jealous, made a number of gods and filled the world with them. Hence all men were cast into hell at death, until the Good God looked down from the highest heaven, had pity on them, and sent his Son to deliver the "spirits in prison," which He did directly He went down into hell after His own death. After Jesus had revealed Himself to the Creator and received his confession of ignorance, Jesus illuminated Paul and made him His apostle. It is extremely unlikely that this story should have formed part of Marcion's own teaching, although it may possibly have been told by some follower of his of Semitic blood, or, as Salmon suggests, by Cerdo. It is to be found in Neumann's translation of Eznig in the *Zeitschr. für hist. Theol.* vol. IV. and in the *Dict. Christian Biog.* s.v. Marcion.

is extremely unlikely in view of the unanimous assertion of the Fathers nearer to him in point of time that he taught the existence of two principles only ; and it is probable that the theory of three principles, if seriously advanced, must have been the work of one of his followers. Tertullian, whose sophistry in combating Marcion's teaching in this respect is here particularly apparent, points out, indeed, that if the Creator be held to be self-originated and not himself the creature of the Supreme God, there must be nine gods instead of two<sup>1</sup>; but there is no reason to suppose that Marcion ever troubled himself about such dialectical subtleties.

The case was different with Apelles, who was certainly later in date than Marcion and perhaps succeeded him in the headship of the sect, either immediately or at one remove<sup>2</sup>. According to Tertullian, Apelles left Rome for Alexandria where he no doubt came in contact with the Gnostic opinions there rife<sup>3</sup>. The slander that Tertullian sets on foot about him to the effect that he forsook his master's continence and was addicted to the company of women is unexpectedly refuted by Tertullian's contemporary, Rhodo<sup>4</sup>. But Apelles must have come in contact in Alexandria with the followers of Valentinus and other Gnostic teachers, and their arguments no doubt compelled him to modify the strict dualism of his master. According to Rhodo, Apelles asserted that there was only one principle of all things, which would imply that the Demiurge was the creature of the Supreme God, and that Matter, instead of being essentially evil and independent, must have been also created by Him. Hippolytus, who was possibly a little later than Rhodo, amplifies this by the statement that Apelles held the Demiurge to be the fashioner of things coming into being

<sup>1</sup> Tertullian, *adv. Marc.* Bk I. c. 16.

<sup>2</sup> Epiphanius, *Haer.* XLII. p. 688, Oehler, says Marcion was succeeded by Lucian, whom Apelles followed. Hippolytus, *op. cit.* Bk VII. cc. 37, 38, p. 393, Cruice, is probably the source of Epiphanius' statement; but he does not seem to have had any first-hand knowledge of the Marcionite heresy or its chiefs, and is not here so good a witness as Tertullian, or Irenaeus, who mentions neither Lucian nor Apelles.

<sup>3</sup> Tertullian, *de Praescript.* c. XXX.

<sup>4</sup> Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.* Bk IV. c. 13.

(subsequent to him)<sup>1</sup>, and that there was a third god or angel of a fiery nature who inspired Moses, and even a fourth who was the cause of evil. In this the Gnostic idea of correspondence or reflection of one world in another is manifest ; but it is evident that it also approaches more nearly than does the uncompromising dualism of Marcion himself to the teaching of the Catholic Church. The same tendency to compromise is evident in Apelles' willingness to use the books of both the Old and the New Testament, quoting with regard to them, if Epiphanius is to be believed, the apocryphal saying of Jesus "Be ye wise money-changers!" to be found in, among other works, the *Pistis Sophia*<sup>2</sup>. Apelles seems also to have modified his master's teaching with regard to the body of Jesus, which was, he said, no phantasm, but a real body of flesh and blood assumed by Him on His descent to the earth, and returned by Him piece by piece on His Ascension to the different elements whence it was drawn. His indebtedness in this to the sources from which the author of the *Pistis Sophia* drew the same doctrine needs no demonstration. Yet there is no reason to assert that Apelles considered these "corrections" of Marcion's teaching in any way essential or binding on his followers. He seems, too, to have adopted one of the practices of the primitive Church in paying attention to the ecstatical visions of "prophets" of both sexes, his faith in the prophecies of a virgin named Philumene being the foundation of Tertullian's slander on his morals. There can be no doubt, however, that in spite of these tendencies, he remained in essentials a true follower of Marcion, and that like his master, he deprecated enquiry into insoluble problems. "One ought not," he said, as Rhodo reports, "to examine doctrine, but everyone should be steadfast in the faith. Those who trust in Him that was crucified will be saved, if only they do good works<sup>3</sup>." Herein he also, like Marcion

<sup>1</sup> ἐδημιούργησε τὰ γενόμενα. Hippolytus, *op. cit.* Bk VII. c. 37, p. 393, Cruice.

<sup>2</sup> Epiphanius, *Haer.* XLII. p. 694, Oehler. The same Logion or saying is also found in Clem. Alex. *Strom.* Bk I. c. 28, in the *Apostolical Constitutions*, Bk II. c. 37, and in Clem. *Hom.* XVIII. c. 20.

<sup>3</sup> Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.* Bk V. c. 13.

himself, seems to have anticipated by many centuries the teaching of the German Reformers.

Other followers of Marcion there were who, thanks to our lack of information concerning them, are to us merely names. Thus Tatian, who was according to tradition a disciple of Justin Martyr but fell away from orthodoxy after his teacher's death, seems to have held a kind of intermediate position between the two great schools of heresy. While teaching, according to Irenaeus, a system of aeons not unlike that of Valentinus, he adopted in full the notions of Marcion as to abstinence from marriage, from the eating of flesh, and from the use of wine, and may have been the founder of a separate sect called Encratites<sup>1</sup>. We hear, too, of one Prepon, "an Assyrian" or native of Syria, a follower of Marcion, whom Hippolytus represents as teaching that Jesus Himself was intermediate between the good and evil deities and came down to earth to be freed from all evil<sup>2</sup>. Rhodo also speaks<sup>3</sup> of Potitus and Basilicus, followers of Marcion, who held fast to his doctrine of two principles, while Syneros, as he affirms, led a school which asserted that there were three "natures." Lucian also, who, according to Hippolytus and Epiphanius, came in point of time between Marcion and Apelles<sup>4</sup>, may have inclined to the same doctrine, and taught, unlike Marcion, that there would be a resurrection, not of the body nor of the soul, but of some part of man which he also defined as being of a "third nature"<sup>5</sup>.

The conversion of Constantine put a violent end to any open propagation of the doctrines of Marcion or his successors. In the picturesque words of Eusebius "the lurking-places of the heretics were broken up by the Emperor's commands, and the savage beasts which they harboured were put to flight." Hence, he goes on to tell us, many of those who had been "deceived" crept secretly into the Church, and were ready to

<sup>1</sup> Irenaeus, Bk I. c. 26, § 1, p. 220, Harvey. According to Hippolytus, *op. cit.* Bk VIII. c. 16, p. 416, Cruice, he had been a disciple of Justin Martyr.

<sup>2</sup> Hippolytus, *op. cit.* Bk VII. c. 31, p. 382, Cruice.

<sup>3</sup> Eusebius, *op. et loc. cit. supra*.

<sup>4</sup> Hippolytus, *op. cit.* Bk VII. c. 37, p. 393, Cruice; Epiphanius, *Haer* XLIII. p. 688, Oehler.

<sup>5</sup> Tertullian, *de Resurrectione*, c. II.

secure their own safety by every sort of dissimulation<sup>1</sup>. This practice, as we have seen, had always been popular among the Gnostics properly so called, whose religion consisted in part in the knowledge of the formulas secretly imparted and preserved with jealous care from all but the initiated. Although there is no distinct proof that the same course was now adopted by the Marcionites, there is some reason for thinking that this was the case. The postponement of baptism noticed above must have early divided the members of the Marcionite churches into grades of which the largest was in an inferior position to the others. It is unlikely that these catechumens, who might witness but not share in the sacraments celebrated for their higher-placed brethren, should have courted persecution on behalf of a faith with which they were not fully entrusted. The outbreak of the Arian controversy, which followed so closely on the conversion of Constantine, also carried within the Catholic Church those speculations about the Divine nature which had hitherto formed a fruitful source of dissension among the Marcionites themselves. With their synagogues and meeting-places taken away from them and handed over to the Catholics, many of them must have looked about for some tolerated community which they could join, and of all that thus offered themselves, the Catholic Church offered the greatest inducements to them.

Yet another way was open to the convinced Marcionite who could not bring himself to reject Marcion's view that the true purport of Jesus' teaching had been obscured by the additions of Judaizing apostles. The sect of the followers of Manes, who began to show themselves in the Western part of the Roman Empire shortly before Constantine's conversion, professed a dualism more uncompromising than any that Marcion had taught, and coupled with it an organization so skilful and effective that it was able for some ten centuries longer to defy the efforts of the rest of Christendom for its suppression. In its division of all Manichaeans into the two great classes of Perfect and Hearers it drew very close to Marcionite practice; and the liberty which it allowed the Hearers of outwardly

<sup>1</sup> Eusebius, *Vita Constantini*, Bk III. cc. 64-66.

professing any faith they pleased must have enabled the Marcionite who joined it to keep those articles of his former creed most dear to him without coming into violent collision with either Church or State. Hence the tradition seems well founded which asserts that the majority of those Marcionites, who did not become reconciled with the Catholic Church after Constantine's alliance with it, joined the ranks of the Manichaeans, and so ceased to exist as a separate community<sup>1</sup>.

The direct influence of Marcion's teaching upon that of the Catholic Church was probably very small. In spite of the efforts of recent writers to maintain the contrary<sup>2</sup>, it is difficult to see that this first attempt, honest and sincere as it undoubtedly was, at the reformation of Christianity ever bore fruit of lasting value. Its main principle which, as we have seen, was the rejection of the Jewish scriptures and their bearing upon the Mission of Jesus, has been ignored, since Marcion's death as in his lifetime, by every other Church and sect professing Christian doctrines. His common-sense view, that the words of the Christian Bible must mean what their authors and their contemporaries would have naturally taken them to mean, and do not for the most part contain any deeply hidden or allegorical significance, was in like manner repudiated by the whole of Christendom, which, up to the latter part of the xixth century, continued to construe the greater part of its sacred books by trope and figure<sup>3</sup>. There remains then only the asceticism and austerity that Marcion practised which the orthodox could have borrowed from him. But, we have seen that the religious abstinence from procreation, and from the use of meat and wine, can be traced back to the appearance of Orphism in Greece some five hundred years before the Birth of Christ; and if the Christian Church adopted, as it partly did,

<sup>1</sup> So Salmon in *Dict. Christian Biog.* and Harnack in *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, both s.v. Marcion.

<sup>2</sup> Hatch, *H.L.* p. 77, n. 1, quoting Harnack.

<sup>3</sup> Hatch, *op. cit.* pp. 75, 76, shows that the allegorical method introduced by the Gnostics in order to avoid the difficulty of reconciling the Old Testament with the New was at first scornfully rejected, but was soon adopted by the orthodox, and was pursued by both Catholic and Protestant writers up to a few years ago.

these practices in a modified form, it was by way of inheritance from a source which was much nearer to it than Marcion's heresy. That many of Marcion's ideas have been revived in our own day is likely enough, and this opinion has been put forward with much skill and point by Dr Foakes-Jackson in his Hulsean Lectures. But this is a case of revival rather than of descent, and a reformer who has to wait some eighteen centuries before his ideas meet with acceptance, may well be held to have failed to influence after ages.

Notwithstanding this, the heresy of Marcion will always have great interest for the student of the History of Religions. The success—fugitive as such things go, but real enough for a time—with which Marcion set up a Church over against that tremendous polity which has been called without much exaggeration “the very master-piece of human wisdom,” would be alone sufficient to make it precious in the eyes of those who are not blind to the romance of history. To archaeologists it is the more interesting that it is only in its direction that we are likely to receive in future much additional light upon the struggles of nascent Christianity with one category of its competitors. The very voluminous writings of the other Gnostics were destroyed by the triumphant Church with such minute care that the Coptic texts described in the last chapter form the only relics of this once enormous literature that have survived to us. The heathen religions which for some time disputed the ground with the Church have also left few traces partly for the same reason, and partly because the secrecy to which they pledged their votaries made it unlikely that many written documents of these faiths would survive. But the *Antitheses* of Marcion were in the hands of Photius in the xth century; and, although it is dangerous to prophesy in such matters, it is by no means impossible that some lucky discovery within the borders of the Turkish Empire may yet give us a MS. that will enable us to reconstruct them. If that should ever be the case, we shall be in a far better position than we are now to decide whether the analogies between Marcionism and Protestantism that have been detected of late years are essential or superficial.

## CHAPTER XII

### THE WORSHIP OF MITHRAS

FEW of us, perhaps, are inclined to recognize that, from its first establishment down to the Mahommedan Invasion of the viii<sup>th</sup> century, the Roman Empire found itself constantly in the presence of a bitter, determined, and often victorious enemy. Alexander had conquered but had not destroyed the Persians; and, although the magic of the hero's personality held them faithful to him during his too brief life, he was no sooner dead than they hastened to prove that they had no intention of tamely giving up their nationality. Peucestas, the Royal body-guard who received the satrapy of Persia itself on his master's death, and was confirmed in it at the first shuffling of the cards at Triparadisus, found it expedient to adopt the Persian language and dress, with the result that his subjects conceived for him an affection only equal to that which they afterwards showed for Seleucus<sup>1</sup>. Later, when the rise of the Parthian power under Arsaces brought about the defeat of Seleucus II Callinicus, the opposition to European forms of government found a centre further north<sup>2</sup>, whence armies of lightly-equipped horsemen were able to raid up to the Eastern shores of the Mediterranean<sup>3</sup>. Thanks probably to the knowledge of this support in reserve, when Western Asia found the military power of the Greek kings becoming exhausted by internecine wars, she began to throw off the alien civilization that she had in

<sup>1</sup> Droysen, *Hist. de l'Hellénisme*, t. II. pp. 33, 289.

<sup>2</sup> *Op. cit.* III. pp. 351, 352; 439, 450. As Droysen points out, in this respect there was no practical difference between Parthian and Persian.

<sup>3</sup> As in B.C. 41, when the Parthians under Pacorus "rushed" Palestine. See Morrison, *The Jews under the Romans*, p. 58, for authorities. Cf. Chapter V. Vol. I. p. 101, n. 3, *supra*.



part acquired, and to return more and more to Persian ways<sup>1</sup>. When the Romans in their turn set to work to eat up the enfeebled Greek kingdoms, they quickly found themselves in presence of a revived nationality as firmly held and nearly as aggressive as their own, and henceforth Roman and Parthian were seldom at peace. The long struggle with Mithridates, who gave himself out as a descendant of Darius<sup>2</sup>, taught the Romans how strong was the reaction towards Persian nationality even in Asia Minor, and the overthrow of Crassus by the Parthians convinced his countrymen for a time of the folly of pushing their arms too far eastwards.

With the establishment of the Empire, the antagonism between Rome and Persia became still more strongly marked, and a struggle commenced which lasted with little intermission until the foundation of the Mahommedan Caliphate. In this struggle the advantage was not always, as we should like to think, on the side of the Europeans. While Augustus reigns, Horace boasts, there is no occasion to dread the "dreadful Parthians<sup>3</sup>"; but Corbulo is perpetually fighting them, and when Nero commits suicide, the legend immediately springs up that the tyrant is not dead, but has only betaken himself beyond the Euphrates to return with an army of Rome's most dreaded enemies to lay waste his rebellious country<sup>4</sup>. Towards the close of the first Christian century, Trajan, fired, according to Gibbon, by the example of Alexander, led an army into the East and achieved successes which enabled him to add to his titles that of Parthicus<sup>5</sup>; but the whole of his Oriental conquests were given back by the prudent Hadrian on his succession to the throne. During the reign of Marcus Aurelius, Avidius Cassius

<sup>1</sup> This is shown by, among other things, the claims of the kings of Armenia, Cappadocia, and Pontus to be descended from the seven heroes who delivered Persia from the Magians after the death of Cambyzes. See Droysen, *op. cit.* II. p. 519; III. pp. 82, 83.

<sup>2</sup> Droysen, *op. cit.* III. p. 83.

<sup>3</sup> Horace, *Odes*, Bk IV. Ode 5. Cf. his *Carmen Seculare*.

<sup>4</sup> Renan, *L'Antéchrist*, pp. 317, 318, for authorities. A critical essay on the Neronic myth and its congeners is to be found in Dr Charles' *Ascension of Isaiah*, p. li sqq.

<sup>5</sup> Gibbon, *Decline and Fall* (Bury's ed.), vol. I. pp. 5, 205.

obtained some solid victories on the frontier; but Macrinus is said to have bought off the Parthians with a bribe of nearly two millions of money. The rise of the Sassanian house and the retransfer of the leadership from the Parthians to their kinsmen in Persia proper brought about the reform of the Persian religion, and added another impulse to the increasing strength of Persian national feeling. Alexander Severus may have gained some successes in the field over Ardeshr or Artaxerxes, the restorer of the Persian monarchy<sup>1</sup>; but in the reign of the last named king's son and successor Sapor, the capture of the Emperor Valerian with his whole army, and the subsequent ravaging of the Roman provinces in Asia by the victors, showed the Republic how terrible was the might of the restored kingdom<sup>2</sup>. Aurelian, the conqueror of Palmyra, did much to restore the prestige of Roman arms in the East; and although he was assassinated when on the march against Persia, the Emperor Carus shortly after led a successful expedition into the heart of the Persian kingdom<sup>3</sup>. In the reign of Diocletian, indeed, the Persians lost five provinces to the Romans<sup>4</sup>; but under Constantine the Great the Romans were again vanquished in the field, and the Persians were only prevented by the heroic resistance of the fortified town of Nisibis and an incursion into their Eastern provinces of tribes from Central Asia from again overrunning the Asiatic possessions of Rome<sup>5</sup>.

Henceforward, the history of the long contest between the two great empires—"the eyes," as the Persian ambassador told Galerius, "of the civilized world<sup>6</sup>," is the record of almost uninterrupted advance on the part of Persia and of continual retreat on the side of Rome. The patriotic enthusiasm of a Julian, and the military genius of a Belisarius, aided by the dynastic revolutions common among Oriental nations, might for

<sup>1</sup> Gibbon, *op. cit.* i. p. 209. Severus' victories are doubted by Gibbon; and Prof. Bury apparently supports his author.

<sup>2</sup> *Op. cit.* i. pp. 269, 270. Prof. Bury in his Appendix 17 points out that the whole history of Valerian's capture is still very obscure.

<sup>3</sup> *Op. cit.* i. p. 340.

<sup>4</sup> *Op. cit.* i. p. 375. See Prof. Bury's note 83 on page cited.

<sup>5</sup> *Op. cit.* ii. pp. 228-231.

<sup>6</sup> *Op. cit.* i. p. 373.

a time arrest the progress of the conquering Persians ; but, bit by bit, the Asiatic provinces slipped out of the grasp of the European masters of Constantinople. In 603 A.D., it looked as if Persia were at length in the position to deliver the final blow in a war which had lasted for more than five centuries. By the invasion of Chosroes and his successive captures of Antioch, Jerusalem, and Egypt, it seemed as if the Persians had restored the world-empire of Cambyses and Darius ; but the Persians then discovered, as Xerxes had done a millennium earlier, how dangerous it is for Orientals, even when flushed by conquest, to press Europeans too far. The Roman Emperor Heraclius, who never before or afterwards gave much proof of military or political capacity, from his besieged capital of Constantinople collected an army with which he dashed into Persia in a manner worthy of Alexander himself. After six brilliant campaigns he dictated to the Persians a triumphant peace in the very heart of their empire<sup>1</sup>. A few years later, and its shattered and disorganized remains fell an easy prey to the Mahommedan invaders.

The effect of this long rivalry might have been expected to produce in the Romans during its continuance a hearty dislike of the customs and institutions of the nation opposed to them ; but almost the exact contrary was the result. It may be argued that Rome's proved skill in government was in no small measure due to her ready adoption of all that seemed to her admirable in the nations that she overcame. Or it may be that the influence which the memory of Alexander exercised over all those who succeeded to his empire led them to imitate him in his assumption of Persian manners. The fact remains that, long before the division of the Roman Empire into East and West, the Romans displayed a taste for Oriental luxury and magnificence which seems entirely at variance with the simplicity and austerity of the republican conquerors of Carthage. It is hardly too much to say that while Alexander's conscious aim was to make Asia Greek, the Romans, on possessing themselves of his Asiatic conquests, allowed themselves to become to a

<sup>1</sup> Gibbon, *op. cit.* v. pp. 78 *sqq.* Winwood Reade, *Martyrdom of Man*, pp. 249, 250, tells the story excellently and dramatically.

great extent "Medized," and showed an unexpected admiration for the habits and culture of Alexander's Persian subjects.

It may of course be said that this was in external matters only, and that the "Persian furniture" which excited Horace's wrath<sup>1</sup> might if it stood alone be looked upon as merely a passing fashion; but the Court ceremonial introduced by Diocletian argues a steady tendency towards Persian customs and forms of government that must have been in operation for centuries. The household of a Julian Caesar was no differently arranged from that of a Roman noble of the period, and his title of Prince of the Senate showed that he was only looked upon as the first of his equals. But Diocletian was in all respects but language a Persian emperor or Shah, and his style of "Lord and God," his diadem, his silken state dress, the elaborate ritual of his court, and the long hierarchy of its officials, were all designed to compel his subjects to recognize the fact<sup>2</sup>. As usual, the official form of religion in the Roman Empire had for some time given indications of the coming change in the form of government. The sun had always been the principal natural object worshipped by the Persians, and a high-priest of the Sun-God had sat upon the Imperial throne of Rome in the form of the miserable Heliogabalus. Only 33 years before Diocletian, Aurelian, son of another Sun-God's priestess and as virile and rugged as his predecessor was soft and effeminate, had also made the Sun-God the object of his special devotion and of an official worship. Hence Diocletian and his colleague Galerius were assured in advance of the approval of a large part of their subjects when they took the final plunge in 307 A.D., and proclaimed Mithras, "the Unconquered Sun-God," the Protector of their Empire<sup>3</sup>.

In spite of this, however, it is very difficult to say how

<sup>1</sup> Horace, *Odes*, Bk I. Ode 38.

<sup>2</sup> Gibbon, *op. cit.* I. p. 382. Cf. Cumont, *Religions Orientales*, p. 171. Lactantius, *de Mort. Persecutor.* c. XXI., says that this was the conscious aim of Galerius. Although his authority in such a matter is suspect, there can be little doubt of the fact.

<sup>3</sup> The actual decree of the emperors is given in Cumont, *Textes et Monuments*, t. II. Inscr. 367. The date should probably be 304 A.D. See n. on Table of Dates, Vol. I. *supra*.

Mithras originally became known to the Romans. Plutarch<sup>1</sup> says indeed that his cult was first introduced by the Cilician pirates who were put down by Pompey<sup>1</sup>. This is not likely to be literally true; for the summary methods adopted by these sea-robbers towards their Roman prisoners hardly gave much time for proselytism, while most of the pirates whom Pompey spared at the close of his successful operations he deported to Achaea, which was one of the few places within the Empire where the Mithraic faith did not afterwards show itself. What Plutarch's story probably means is that the worship of Mithras first came to Rome from Asia Minor, and there are many facts which go to confirm this. M. Cumont, the historian of Mithraism, has shown that, long before the Romans set foot in Asia, there were many colonies of emigrants from Persia who with their *magi* or priests had settled in Asia Minor, including in that phrase Galatia, Phrygia, Lydia, and probably Cilicia<sup>2</sup>. When Rome began to absorb these provinces, slaves, prisoners, and merchants from them would naturally find their way to Rome, and in time would no doubt draw together for the worship of their national deities in the way that we have seen pursued by the worshippers of the Alexandrian Isis and the Jewish exiles. The *magi* of Asia Minor were great supporters of Mithridates, and the Mithridatic wars were no doubt responsible for a large number of these immigrants.

Once introduced, however, the worship of Mithras spread like wild-fire. The legions from the first took kindly to it, and this is the less surprising when we find that many of them were recruited under the earliest emperors in Anatolian states like Commagene, where the cult was, if not indigenous, yet of very early growth<sup>3</sup>. Moreover the wars of the Romans against the Persians kept them constantly in the border provinces of the two empires, where the native populations not infrequently changed masters. The enemy's town that the legions besieged one year might therefore give them a friendly reception the next; and there was thus abundant opportunity for the acquaintance

<sup>1</sup> Plutarch, *Vit. Pomp.* c. xxiv.

<sup>2</sup> Cumont, *Rel. Or.* pp. 167, 168; 173, 174; *id. T. et M.* I. pp. 9, 10. Cf. *P.S.B.A.* 1912, pp. 127, 128.

<sup>3</sup> Cumont, *T. et M.* I. p. 247.

of both sides with each others' customs. When the Roman troops marched back to Europe, as was constantly the case during the civil wars which broke out on the downfall of the Julian house, they took back with them the worship of the new god whom they had adopted, and he thus became known through almost the whole of the Roman Empire<sup>1</sup>. "From the shores of the Euxine to the north of Brittany and to the fringe of the Sahara<sup>2</sup>," as M. Cumont says, its monuments abound, and, he might have added, they have been met with also in the Egyptian Delta, in Babylon, and on the northern frontiers of India. In our own barbarous country we have found them not only in London and York, but as far west as Gloucester and Chester and as far north as Carlisle and Newcastle<sup>3</sup>. The Balkan countries, like Italy, Germany, Southern France, and Spain, are full of them ; but there was one part of the Roman Empire into which they did not penetrate freely. This was Greece, where the memories of the Persian Wars long survived the independence of the country, and where the descendants of those who fought at Salamis, Marathon, and Thermopylae would have nothing to do with a god coming from the invaders' fatherland. It is only very lately that the remains of Mithras-worship have been discovered at the Piraeus and at Patras, in circumstances which show pretty clearly that it was there practised only by foreigners<sup>4</sup>.

Notwithstanding this popularity, it is not easy to say exactly what god Mithras' European worshippers considered him to be. If length of ancestry went for anything in such matters, he might indeed claim a greater antiquity than any deity of the later Roman Pantheon, with the single exception of the Alexandrian gods. Mithras was certainly worshipped in Vedic India, where his name of Mitra constantly occurs in the sacred texts as the "shining one," meaning apparently the material sun<sup>5</sup>. He is there invoked in company with Varuna, generally con-

— <sup>1</sup> Dill, *Roman Society from Nero to Marcus Aurelius*, pp. 593-597.

<sup>2</sup> Cumont, *T. et M.* I. p. 248.

<sup>3</sup> For the list see Cumont, *T. et M.* I. p. 258, n. 7. He thinks the worship was first introduced here by the legions from Germany.

<sup>4</sup> Avezou and Picard, "Bas-relief Mithriaque," *R.H.R.* t. LXIV. (Sept. Oct. 1911), pp. 179 *sqq.*

<sup>5</sup> Cumont, *T. et M.* I. p. 223, n. 2.

sidered the god of the sky, and therefore according to some, the prototype of the Greek Zeus and the Latin Jupiter<sup>1</sup>. His appearance in a similar connection in the sacred books of the Persians led the founders of the comparative study of religion to think that he must have been one of the primitive gods of their hypothetical Aryan race, and that his worship must go back to the imaginary time when Persians and Hindus dwelt side by side in the plains of Cashmere. But this theory is giving way before proof that the original home of the Indo-European race was Europe, and has been badly shaken by the discovery at Boghaz Keui of tablets showing that the gods Mithra and Varuna were gods of the Mitannians or Hittites<sup>2</sup> at some date earlier than 1500 B.C., and therefore long before the appearance of the Persians in history. If the worship of Mithras were not indigenous in Western Asia, it may therefore well have come there independently of the Persians<sup>3</sup>.

There is no doubt, however, that the roots of Mithras-worship went very far down into the Persian religion. In the Yashts or hymns which are the earliest evidence of primitive Iranian beliefs, Mithra—to use the Avestic spelling of his name—frequently appears, not indeed as the material sun, but as the “genius of the heavenly light” which lightens the whole universe<sup>4</sup> and is the most beneficent among the powers of Nature. Mithras is not here, however, the Supreme Being, nor even the highest among the gods benevolent to man. This last place is occupied in the Zend Avesta by Ahura Mazda,

<sup>1</sup> Herodotus, Bk I. c. 131. Cf. F. Max Müller, *Hibbert Lectures*, p. 276. The similarity of name between Varuna and the Greek Ouranos is fairly obvious. Prof. Hope Moulton, *Early Zoroastrianism*, 1913, pp. 391, 392, n. 3, argues that the Persian god of the sky was called Dyaush or Zeus.

<sup>2</sup> Certainly of the Mitannians, who, according to Prof. Hugo Winckler, were one of the two main branches of the Hittites, and a Syrian people. See his report on Excavations at Boghaz Keui in the *Mitteilungen* of the Deutsche Orient-Gesellschaft for 1907. The text is given in the *J.R.A.S.* for 1910, pp. 723 *sqq.*

<sup>3</sup> If we accept the latest theory which makes Russia the original home of the Aryan race (see Zaborowski, *Les Peuples Aryens d'Asie et d'Europe* Paris, 1908, p. 424) it may have even had a European origin.

<sup>4</sup> Cumont, *T. et M.* I. p. 225.

"the omniscient lord," who appears to be the Persian form of Varuna, the god of the sky whom we have seen associated with Mitra in the Vedas<sup>1</sup>. Nor is Mithras in the Zend Avesta one of the six Amshaspands, the deified abstractions or personified attributes of Ahura Mazda, who, in the later developments of the Persian religion, occupy towards him much the same position that the "Roots" of Simon Magus and the Aeons of the Pleroma among the Gnostics do towards the Boundless Power or the Ineffable Bythos<sup>2</sup>. In the later Avestic literature, he appears as the chief of the Izeds or Yazatas, a race of genii created by Ahura Mazda, who are the protectors of his universe and the helpers of mankind in their warfare against the powers of darkness<sup>3</sup>. In the latest as in the earliest Persian view of the personality of Mithras, therefore, it is plain that he occupies an intermediate position between the Creator and man.

It is not, however, in the religion associated with the name of Zoroaster that we must look for the origin of Mithraism. The date of the sacred books of Mazdeism and the historical existence of Zoroaster himself have recently been brought down to as late as the VIIIth century B.C.<sup>4</sup> and the appearance in Asia of the Persian tribes as conquerors, whereas Mithras was, as we have seen, worshipped in Asia Minor nearly a millennium earlier. Moreover, the strict dualism which set Ahriman, the god of darkness and evil, in eternal and perhaps equal opposition to Ormuzd, the god of light and goodness, seems to have been unknown before the Sassanid reform in 226 A.D., by which time the worship of Mithras in Europe was at its apogee<sup>5</sup>. M. Cumont is, therefore, doubtless right when he thinks that Mithraism was derived not from Mazdeism, but from Magism

<sup>1</sup> James Darmesteter, *Essais Orientaux*, Paris, 1883, p. 113.

<sup>2</sup> Casartelli, *La Philosophie Religieuse du Mazdéisme sous les Sassanides*, pp. 17, 18.

<sup>3</sup> *Op. cit.* p. 73.

<sup>4</sup> 660-583 B.C. See A. V. Williams Jackson, *Zoroaster*, N.Y. 1901, p. 15 and Appx II. and III. Cf. D. Menant, "Parsis et Parsisme," *Conférences au Musée Guimet* (Bibl. de Vulgarisation), 1904, t. XVI. 1ère Ptie, p. 149.

<sup>5</sup> Darmesteter, *Le Zend Avesta* (Annales du Musée Guimet), Paris, 1892, p. xxvii, for dates. West, *Pahlavi Texts*, pt I. (Sacred Books of the East), pp. lxxviii-lxix; pt II. p. xxiv. Cf. Hope Moulton, *op. cit.* pp. 126, 127.



or the religion of the Magi, the tribe of Medes whose domination was put an end to by Darius the son of Hystaspes, and whose name was afterwards given to a priestly caste and has passed into our own language as the root of the word "magic."

That these Magi practised a religion different from that taught in the Avestic literature is plain enough. The romantic story told by Herodotus of the Magian who seized the throne of Persia during Cambyses' absence in Egypt on the pretence that he was the king's brother whom Cambyses had privily put to death<sup>1</sup>, is fully confirmed by Darius' trilingual inscription on the Rock of Behistun, first copied and deciphered by Sir Henry Rawlinson and lately published in elaborate form by the British Museum<sup>2</sup>. Darius here narrates how "a certain man, a Magian, Gaumata by name...lied unto the people" (saying) 'I am Smerdis, the son of Cyrus, the brother of Cambyses.' Then all the people revolted from Cambyses and went over to him, even Persia and Media and the other provinces." Darius goes on to record that "thereupon Cambyses died by his own hand<sup>3</sup>," that the seven Persian nobles overthrew the pretender much in the way described by Herodotus, and that "I rebuilt the temples of the gods, which that Gaumata, the Magian, had destroyed. I restored that which had been taken away as it was in the days of old<sup>4</sup>." This he tells us he did "by the grace of Ahura Mazda," and that by this grace he always acted. The memory of these events was kept up by the festival of the Magophonia or Massacre of the Magi which was yearly celebrated in Persia and during which no Magus dared show himself in the streets<sup>5</sup>. Darius' words show that there was a religious as well as a dynastic side to the Magian revolt, though whether the false Smerdis restored the old worship of the land, which he found in danger of being supplanted by Zoroastrianism or the worship of Ahura Mazda, may still be doubtful. In any event, the reformation or counter-reformation made by Darius

<sup>1</sup> Herodotus, Bk III. c. 61 sqq.

<sup>2</sup> *The Sculptures and Inscriptions of Darius the Great at Behistun*, British Museum Publications, 1907.

<sup>3</sup> *Op. cit.* pp. 8, 9.

<sup>4</sup> *Op. cit.* p. 14.

<sup>5</sup> Maspero, *Hist. Ancienne des Peuples de l'Orient Classique*, Paris, 1899, t. III. p. 674; Rawlinson, *History of Herodotus*, 1862, vol. II. p. 458.

did not succeed in entirely uprooting the old Magian faith, for Herodotus speaks of the Magi as still being in his time the priestly caste among the Persians, and as acting as diviners and sacrificers to the Achaemenian kings who ruled Persia up to Alexander's Conquest<sup>1</sup>.

The Magian religion as it appears in Herodotus and other Greek authors, however, seems to have shown none of the hostility to the powers of darkness so apparent in the religious literature collected by the Sassanian kings. "The whole circuit of the firmament" was, according to Herodotus, their greatest god or Zeus; and he says that they also "sacrifice to the sun and moon, to the earth, to fire and water, and to the winds"; but that "they do not, like the Greeks, believe the gods to have the same nature as men<sup>2</sup>." He also tells us that later they borrowed from the Arabians and the Assyrians the worship of a goddess whom he calls Mitra, and although he is probably wrong as to the origin and sex of this deity, his evidence shows that Semitic admixture counted for something in the Magian worship. In other respects, the Magian seems to have been a primitive faith given up to the worship of the powers of nature or elements, which it did not personify in the anthropomorphic manner of either the Semites or the Greeks, and to have paid little attention to public ceremonies or ritual. It follows therefore that, like the religions of many uncivilized people of the present day, it would draw no very sharp distinction between good and evil gods, and would be as ready to propitiate or make use of the evil, that is those hostile to man, as the good or benevolent. Plutarch, who describes the religion of the Magi more than three centuries after Herodotus, when the name of Zoroaster the Persian prophet and the dualistic belief favoured by his teaching had long been popularly known in the West, says that the Magi of his time held Mithras to be the "Mediator" or intermediary between "Oromazes" or Light on the one hand, and "Areimanios" or Darkness and Ignorance on the other, and that they used to make bloody sacrifices to the last-named in a place where the sun never comes<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Herodotus, Bk I. c. 140; VII. c. 113.

<sup>2</sup> *Op. cit.* Bk I. c. 131.

<sup>3</sup> Plutarch, *de Is. et Os.* c. XLVI.

It is easy to see how such a cult, without the control of public ceremonies and with its unabashed traffic with the powers of evil, would be likely to degenerate into compulsion or magic.

There was, however, another popular superstition or belief which, about the time when Mithraism made its appearance in Europe, had spread itself over Western Asia. This was the idea that the positions and changes of the heavenly bodies exercise an influence over the affairs of the world and the lot both of kingdoms and individual men. It probably began in Babylonia, where the inhabitants had from Sumerian times shown themselves great observers of the stars, and had been accustomed to record the omens that they drew from their motions for the guidance of the kings<sup>1</sup>. This kind of divination—or astrology to call it by a familiar name—received a great impulse after Alexander's Conquest, in the first place from the break up of the Euphratean priestly colleges before referred to, and the driving out of the lesser priests therein to get their own living, and then from the fact that the scientific enquiry and mathematical genius of the Greeks had made the calculation of the positions of the heavenly bodies at any given date and hour a fairly simple matter to be determined without direct observation<sup>2</sup>. It was probably no mere coincidence that the Chaldaei and the Mathematici, as the astrologers called themselves, should have swarmed at Rome under just those emperors in whose reigns Mithraism began to push itself to the front<sup>3</sup>.

While we may be sure that these factors, the religion of the Magi, the practice of magic, and the astrological art, all counted in the composition of the worship of Mithras, we yet know but very little of its tenets. No work has come down to us from any devotee of Mithras which will give us the same light on the way his worshippers regarded him that the romance of

<sup>1</sup> As in the book called "The Illumination of Bel" found in Assurbanipal's Library at Kuyunjik. See Sayce, "Astronomy and Astrology of the ancient Babylonians and Assyrians," *T.S.B.A.* vol. III. pp. 146 *seqq.* Cf. Chapter III, vol. I. p. 114 *supra* for examples.

<sup>2</sup> That tables were actually used for this purpose, was shown in the *Pall Mall Magazine* for August, 1896 and with more detail in *Star-Lore* for April, 1897.

<sup>3</sup> Dill, *Nero to Marcus Aurelius*, pp. 449, 450, for authorities.

Apuleius and the encomium of Aelius Aristides have cast on the mental attitude of the devotees of the Alexandrian cult. The extensive books of Eubulus and Pallas on Mithras and the history of his worship, which Porphyry tells us were extant from the reign of Hadrian down to his own time<sup>1</sup>, are entirely lost, and our only source of information, except a very few scattered notices in the Fathers and in profane writers like the Emperor Julian and Porphyry himself, are the sculptures and inscriptions which have been found in his ruined chapels. These texts and monuments the scholarly care of M. Cumont has gathered into two large volumes, which will always remain the chief source from which later enquirers must draw their materials<sup>2</sup>. From their study he comes to the conclusion that, in the religion of Mithras, there figured above him the Mazdean gods of good and evil respectively called in the Zend Avesta Ahura Mazda and Angro Mainyus, or in more familiar language, Ormuzd and Ahri-man. Behind and above these again, he would place a Supreme Being called Zervan Akerene or Boundless Time, who seems to be without attributes or qualities, and to have acted only as the progenitor of the opposing couple. This is at first sight very probable, because the Orphic doctrine, which, as we have seen, made Chronos or Time the progenitor of all the gods, was widely spread in Asia Minor before Alexander's Conquest, and the Persian colonies formed there under his successors must therefore have come in frequent contact with this most accommodating of schools<sup>3</sup>. Traditions of a sect of Zervanists in Western Asia, who taught that all things came from Infinite Time, are also to be found<sup>4</sup>. But most of these are recorded after Mithraism had become extinct; and M. Cumont's proofs of the

<sup>1</sup> Circa 270 A.D. See Cumont, *T. et M.* I. p. 26.

<sup>2</sup> See Chap. III, Vol. I. p. 103, n. 4, *supra*.

<sup>3</sup> See Chap. IV, Vol. I. p. 123 *supra*.

<sup>4</sup> Cumont, *T. et M.* I. pp. 19-20, relies on a passage quoted by Damascius from a certain Eudemos who may or may not be Eudemos of Rhodes (Alexander's contemporary) that, "of the Magi and all the warrior [or Medic: ἄρπυρι] race some call the intelligible" [*i.e.* that which can be apprehended by the mind only and not by the senses] "and united universe *Topos* (place), while others of them call it Chronos (Time), and that from this universe are to be distinguished a good God and evil demon;

existence of this dogma in the European religion of Mithras can be reduced on final analysis to a quotation from a treatise by Theodore, the Christian bishop of Mopsuestia who died in 428 A.D., directed, as it would seem, against the "Magi" of his time, in which he admits that their dogmas had never been written, and that the sectaries in question, whom he calls Magusaeans, said "sometimes one thing and deceived themselves, and sometimes another and deceived the ignorant<sup>1</sup>." M. Cumont's identification of the lion-headed statue often found in Mithraic chapels with the Supreme God of the system has been shown elsewhere to be open to serious question, and the figure itself to be susceptible of another interpretation than that which he would put upon it<sup>2</sup>. On the whole, therefore, while M. Cumont's mastery of his subject makes it very dangerous to differ from him, it seems that his theory of a Boundless Time as the pinnacle of the Mithraist pantheon cannot be considered as proved.

Whether Ormuzd and Ahriman played any important part in the Roman worship of Mithras is also doubtful. With regard to the first-named, both Greeks and Romans knew him well and identified him unhesitatingly with Zeus and Jupiter<sup>3</sup>. Hence we should expect to find him, if represented at all on the Mithraic sculptures, with the well-known features, the thunder-bolt, and the eagle, which long before this time had become the conventional attributes of the Roman as well as of the Homeric father of gods and men. We are not entirely disappointed, for we find in a bas-relief formerly in a chapel of Mithras at Sissek

or as some say, prior to these, Light and Darkness." "Both the one and the other school therefore," Damascius goes on, "after the undivided Nature, make the double series of the higher powers distinct from one another, of one of which they make Oromasdes the leader, and of the other Arimanius." It seems evident from the above words, that only a certain sect of the Magi in the time of this Eudemos put Time at the head of their pantheon. Cf. Cory's *Ancient Fragments*, 1832, pp. 318, 319.

<sup>1</sup> Cumont, *T. et M.* I. p. 19.

<sup>2</sup> See "The Lion-headed God of the Mithraic Mysteries," *P.S.B.A.* 1912, pp. 125-142, and p. 251 *infra*.

<sup>3</sup> Darmesteter, *Ormuzd et Ahriman*, Paris, 1877, p. 1, quoting a lost book of Aristotle mentioned by Diogenes Laertius.

(the ancient Sissia in Pannonia) and now in the Museum at Agram, the bull-slaying scene in which Mithras figures and which will be presently described, surmounted by an arch on which is ranged Jupiter seated on his throne, grasping the thunderbolt, wielding the sceptre, and occupying the place of honour in a group of gods among whom we may distinguish Mars and Mercury<sup>1</sup>. In another bas-relief of the same scene, now at the Rudolfinum in Klagenfurt, he is depicted in a similar position in an assembly of the gods, which although much mutilated seems to show Zeus or Jupiter in the centre with Hera or Juno by his side<sup>2</sup>. But the most conclusive of these monuments is the great bas-relief found at Osterburken in the Odenwald, wherein the arch surmounting the usual bull-slaying scene contains an assembly of twelve gods with Zeus in the centre armed with thunderbolt and sceptre, while around him are grouped Apollo, Ares, Heracles, Hera, Athena, Aphrodite, Nike, Poseidon, Artemis, Hades, and perhaps Persephone<sup>3</sup>. When by the side of these we put the many inscriptions left by the legionaries to "the holy gods of the fatherland, to Jupiter best and greatest, and to the Unconquered One"; to "Jupiter best and greatest, and to the divine Sun, the Unconquered Sun," and other well-known names of Mithras, there can be no doubt that his worshippers used to adore him together with the head of the Roman Pantheon, and that they considered Mithras in some way the subordinate of or inferior to Jupiter<sup>4</sup>. Yet there

<sup>1</sup> Cumont, *T. et M.* II. p. 326 and Fig. 193.

<sup>2</sup> *Op. cit.* II. p. 336, reproduced in the article in the *P.S.B.A.* quoted in n. 2, p. 237 *supra*. In the collection of busts of the gods on the arch surrounding the Tauroctony at Bologna, the head of Zeus wearing the modius of Serapis appears with six others who, reading from left to right, are the Sun, Saturn, Venus, Jupiter, Mercury, Mars and the Moon. Although Jupiter here occupies the centre and place of honour, it is probable that both he and the other gods are here merely symbols of the planets. See Cumont, *op. cit.* II. p. 261 and Fig. 99.

<sup>3</sup> *Op. cit.* II. p. 349, and Pl. VI. So in the bas-relief of Sarrebourg, unfortunately much mutilated (*op. cit.* II. p. 514), a similar assembly of gods includes Neptune, Bacchus, and Vulcan, who are certainly not gods of the planets.

<sup>4</sup> For these inscriptions, see Cumont, *op. cit.* I. II., Inscriptions 80 (p. 107), 129 (p. 115), 318 (p. 140), 386 (p. 149), 522 (p. 167), and 470 (p. 160).

is nothing to show that the Mithraists as such identified in any way this Jupiter Optimus Maximus with the Persian Ahura Mazda, Oromasdes, or Ormuzd, or that they ever knew him by any of these outlandish names.

The case is different with Ormuzd's enemy Ahriman, who evidently was known by his Persian name to the Roman worshippers of Mithras. In the Vatican can be seen a triangular marble altar dedicated by a *clarissimus* named Agrestius who was a high-priest of Mithras, to "the god Arimanius<sup>1</sup>," and altars with similar inscriptions have been found at Buda-Pesth<sup>2</sup>. At a Mithraic chapel in York also, there was found a statue, now in the Museum of the Philosophical Society in that city, which bears an inscription to the same god Arimanius<sup>3</sup>. There is therefore fairly clear evidence that the Mithraists recognized Ahriman under his Persian name, and that they sacrificed to him, as Plutarch said the "magi" of his time did to the god whom he calls Hades<sup>4</sup>, and this agrees with Herodotus' statement that the Persians used to do the same to "the god who is said to be beneath the earth<sup>5</sup>." Although this gave occasion to the Christian Fathers to accuse the Mithraists of worshipping the devil, we are not thereby bound to conclude that they looked upon Arimanius as an essentially evil being. It seems more probable that they considered him, as the Greeks did their Hades or Pluto, as a chthonian or subterranean power ruling over a place of darkness and discomfort, where there were punishments indeed, but not as a deity insusceptible of propitiation by sacrifice<sup>6</sup>, or compulsion by other means such as magic arts<sup>7</sup>. It

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.* II. p. 98.

<sup>2</sup> *Op. cit.* II. p. 141.

<sup>3</sup> *Op. cit.* II. pp. 160, 392, 393, and article in *P.S.B.A.* quoted in n. 2, p. 237 *supra*.

<sup>4</sup> Plutarch, *de Is. et Os.* c. XLVI. Cf. Origen, *adv. Cels.* Bk I. c. 60.

<sup>5</sup> Herodotus, Bk VII. c. 114.

<sup>6</sup> Clem. Alex. *Strom.* Bk v. c. 11, says Zeus is the same as Hades. He quotes Euripides as authority for the statement, but I do not know the play in which it appears. He also, *op. cit.* Bk v. c. 14, quotes Xenocrates as saying that there is an "Upper and Lower" Zeus.

<sup>7</sup> Heracles, of course, applied compulsion to Hades. For the magic compulsion of the same power, see the Magic Papyrus of the Bibl. Nat. in Wessely's *Griech. Zauberpap.* p. 38.

has been shown elsewhere that his image in a form which fairly represents his attributes in this capacity appears with some frequency in the Mithraic chapels, where a certain amount of mystery attached to its exhibition<sup>1</sup>. It seems to follow from these considerations that the worshippers of Mithras attributed to their special god no inferiority to Ahriman as M. Cumont's argument supposes, and that the only power whom they acknowledged as higher than Mithras himself was the Roman equivalent of Ormuzd, the Jupiter Optimus Maximus adored throughout the Roman Empire of their time as the head of the Pantheon<sup>2</sup>.

The connection of Mithras with the sun is also by no means easy to unravel. The Vedic Mitra was, as we have seen, originally the material sun itself, and the many hundreds of votive inscriptions left by the worshippers of Mithras to "the unconquered Sun Mithras<sup>3</sup>," to the unconquered solar divinity (*numen*) Mithras<sup>4</sup>, to the unconquered Sun-God (*deus*) Mithra<sup>5</sup>, and allusions in them to the priests (*sacerdotes*), worshippers (*cultores*), and temples (*templum*) of the same deity leave no doubt open that he was in Roman times a sun-god<sup>6</sup>. Yet this does not necessarily mean that he was actually the day-star visible to mankind, and the Greeks knew well enough how to distinguish between Apollo the god of light who was once at any rate a sun-god, and Helios the Sun itself<sup>7</sup>. On the Mithraic sculptures, we frequently see the unmistakable figure of Mithras riding in the chariot of the Sun-God driven by the divinity with long hair and a rayed nimbus, whom we know to be this Helios or his Roman equivalent, going through some ceremony of consecration with him, receiving messages from him, and seated side by side with him at a banquet which is evidently a ritual feast. M. Cumont explains this by the theory that Mithras, while in

<sup>1</sup> *P.S.B.A.* 1912, p. 137, for authorities.

<sup>2</sup> Jean Reville, *La Religion à Rome sous les Sévères*, Paris, 1886, p. 30.

<sup>3</sup> Cumont, *T. et M.* II. p. 91, no. 2 ; p. 99, nos. 30, 34 ; p. 102, no. 49 ; p. 103, no. 53.

<sup>4</sup> *Op. cit.* II. p. 99, no. 29.

<sup>5</sup> *Op. cit.* II. p. 105, no. 62 ; p. 116, no. 131.

<sup>6</sup> *Op. cit.* II. p. 96, nos. 17, 20 ; p. 117, no. 139 ; p. 145, no. 354.

<sup>7</sup> Pindar, *Isthm.* v. 1, where the Sun is said to be the son of Theia.



Persia and in the earliest Aryan traditions the genius of the celestial light only<sup>1</sup>, no sooner passed into Semitic countries and became affected by the astrological theories of the Chaldaeans, than he was identified with their sun-god Shamash<sup>2</sup>, and this seems as reasonable a theory as can be devised. Another way of accounting for what he calls the "at first sight contradictory proposition" that Mithras at once was and was not the sun<sup>3</sup>, is to suppose that while the Mithraists wished those who did not belong to their faith to believe that they themselves worshipped the visible luminary, they yet instructed their votaries in private that he was a deity superior to it and in fact the power behind it. As we shall see, the two theories are by no means irreconcilable, although absolute proof of neither can yet be offered.

One can speak with more certainty about the Legend or mythical history of Mithras which M. Cumont has contrived with rare acumen to reconstruct from the monuments found in his chapels. It is comprised in eleven or twelve scenes or tableaux which we will take in their order<sup>4</sup>. We first see the birth of the god, not from the head of his father Zeus like Athena, or from his thigh like Dionysos, but from a rock, which explains his epithet of "Petrogenes" or rock-born. The god is represented in this scene as struggling from the rock in which he is embedded below the waist, and always uplifts in one hand a broad knife of which we shall afterwards see him make use, and in the other a lighted torch<sup>5</sup>. He is here represented as a boy, and wears the Phrygian cap or so-called cap of liberty which is his distinctive attribute, while the torch is doubtless, as M. Cumont surmises, symbolical of the light which he is bringing into the world<sup>6</sup>. The rock is sometimes encircled by the folds of a large serpent, probably here as elsewhere a symbol of the earth, and is in the

<sup>1</sup> Cumont, *T. et M.* I. p. 225, and n. I; cf. Darmesteter, *Ormuzd et Ahriman*, p. 65.

<sup>2</sup> Cumont, *T. et M.* I. p. 231.

<sup>3</sup> *Op. cit.* I. p. 200.

<sup>4</sup> *Op. cit.* I. pp. 304-306. The best and clearest example of these scenes is perhaps that given in the bas-reliefs surrounding the Tauroctony in the Mithraeum at Osterburken. See *op. cit.* II. p. 350 (Monument 246).

<sup>5</sup> *Op. cit.* II. Fig. 1 of Mon. 246 (p. 350).

<sup>6</sup> *Op. cit.* I. pp. 159 *sqq.*

Mithraic chapel discovered at Housesteads in Northumberland represented in the form of an egg, the upper part remaining on the head of the nascent god like an egg-shell on that of a newly-hatched chicken<sup>1</sup>. This is probably due to some confusion or identification with the Orphic legend of the First-born or Phanes who sprang from the cosmic egg; but the central idea of the rock-birth seems to be that of the spark, hidden as it were in the stone and leaping forth when struck. In one or two examples of the scene, the miraculous birth is watched by a shepherd or shepherds, which leads M. Cumont to draw a parallel between this and the Adoration of the Shepherds at the Birth of Christ.

. The next two scenes are more difficult to interpret with anything approaching certainty. In one of them<sup>2</sup>, Mithras is represented as standing upright before a tree from which he cuts or tears a large branch bearing leaves and fruit. He is here naked, save for the distinctive cap; but immediately after, he is seen emerging from the leafage fully clothed in Oriental dress. In the next scene—the relative order of the scenes seems settled by the places they most often occupy on different examples of the same sculptures<sup>3</sup>—Mithras in the Phrygian cap, Persian trousers, and flowing mantle generally worn by him, kneels on one knee drawing a bow, the arrows from which strike a rock in the distance and draw from it a stream of water which a kneeling man receives in his hands and lifts to his mouth<sup>4</sup>. Several variants of this scene exist, in one of which a suppliant is kneeling before the archer-god and raising his hands towards him as if in prayer; while in another, the rock may well be a cloud. M. Cumont can only suggest with regard to these scenes, that the first may be an allusion to the Fall of Man and his subsequently clothing himself with leaves as described in the Book of Genesis, and

<sup>1</sup> Cumont, *op. cit.* II. p. 395, and Fig. 315.

<sup>2</sup> *Op. cit.* II. p. 350, f (2) of Osterburken.

<sup>3</sup> It is not invariable, as the sculptor was sometimes evidently governed by considerations of space.

<sup>4</sup> *Op. cit.* II. p. 350, f (5) of Osterburken. Cf. Mon. 245, Pl. v (Neuenheim) and Mon. 251, Pl. vii (Heddernheim).

that the second scene may depict a prolonged drought upon earth, in which man prays to Mithras and is delivered by the god's miraculous production of rain. He admits, however, that this is pure conjecture, and that he knows no Indian, Persian, or Chaldaean legend or myth to which the scenes in question can be certainly attached. It seems therefore useless to discuss them further here.

Passing on, we come to a series of scenes, the meaning of which is more easily intelligible. In all of these a bull plays a principal part. It is abundantly clear that this bull is no terrestrial creature, but is the Goshurun or Heavenly Bull of the Zend Avesta, from whose death come forth not only man, but beasts, trees, and all the fruits of the earth<sup>1</sup>. In the Mithraic sculptures, we see the Bull first sailing over the waters in a cup-shaped boat<sup>2</sup> like the coracles still used on the Euphrates, or escaping from a burning stable to which Mithras and a companion have set fire<sup>3</sup>. Then he is depicted grazing peaceably or raising his head now and then as if alarmed by some sudden noise<sup>4</sup>. Next he is chased by Mithras, who seizes him by the horns, mounts him<sup>5</sup>, and after a furious gallop casts him over his shoulders, generally holding him by the hind legs so that the horned head dangles to the ground<sup>6</sup>. In this position, he is taken into the cave which forms the chapel of Mithras.

Here, if the order in the most complete monuments be followed, we break off to enter upon another set of scenes which

<sup>1</sup> West, *Pahlavi Texts*, Pt I, *S.B.E.* p. 20 (Bundahish); Porphyry, *de antro nympharum*, c. 18. Cf. Döllinger, *J. und H.* I. p. 419, and Tiele, *Religion of the Iranian Peoples* (Eng. ed.), Bombay, 1912, Pt I, p. 113.

<sup>2</sup> Cumont, *T. et M.* II. p. 298, Fig. 154 (Sarmizegetusa); p. 309, Fig. 167 (Apulum); p. 326, Fig. 193 (Sissek). Döllinger, *J. und H.* I. p. 141, thinks this cup-shaped boat represents the Moon. But see against this Cumont, *op. cit.* I. pp. 167, 168.

<sup>3</sup> Cumont, *T. et M.* II. p. 515 and Pl. IX, Mon. 273 *ter* d (8) (Sarrebouurg). Cf. *ibid.* II. p. 310, Fig. 168, Mon. 192 *bis* b (7), also I. p. 167 and n. 5.

<sup>4</sup> *Op. cit.* II. p. 346, e (1) and Pl. V (Neuenheim); II. p. 350, f (3) (Osterburken); II. p. 339, b (6) and Pl. IV (Mauls).

<sup>5</sup> *Op. cit.* II. p. 309, a (1) (Apulum); II. p. 326, b (3) and Fig. 193 (Sissek).

<sup>6</sup> *Op. cit.* II. p. 346, e (4) (Neuenheim); II. p. 309, a (2) (Apulum); II. p. 515, d (10) (Sarrebouurg).

illustrate the relations between Mithras and the sun<sup>1</sup>. In what again seems to be the first in order, we see Mithras upright with a person kneeling before him who, from the rayed nimbus round his head, is evidently the god Helios or Sol<sup>2</sup>. In one representation of this scene, Mithras extends his left hand towards this nimbus as if to replace it on the head of its wearer<sup>3</sup> from which it has been displaced in yet another monument<sup>4</sup>, while in the other, he displays an object not unlike a Phrygian cap which may, however, be, as M. Cumont suggests, something like a water-skin<sup>5</sup>. Generally, Mithras is represented as holding this object over the bared head of the kneeling Sun-God, as if to crown him with it<sup>6</sup>. Then we find Mithras with the ray-crowned Sun-God upright beside him, while he grasps his hand in token, as it would seem, of alliance or friendship<sup>7</sup>. If we accept the hint afforded by the theory that the rock yielding water on being split by the arrows of Mithras is really a cloud producing the fertilizing rain, we may imagine that we have here the unconquered god removing clouds which obscure the face of the great life-giving luminary and restoring to him the crown of rays which enables him to shed his kindly light upon the earth. The earth would thus be made fit for the creation of man and other animals which, as we shall see, follows; but in any event, the meaning of the scene which shows the alliance is, as M. Cumont has pointed out, not doubtful<sup>8</sup>. In one monument, where Mithras grasps the hand of the person we have identified with the Sun-God before an altar, he at the same time draws his sword, as if to perform the exchange of blood or blood-covenant usual in the East on swearing alliance<sup>9</sup>. Possibly the crowning scene, as

<sup>1</sup> Cumont, *op. cit.* I. p. 304, puts these scenes in a slightly different order. That followed here is that adopted in the Mithraeum at Hedderneim, *op. cit.* II. Pl. VII, where the sequence is fairly plain.

<sup>2</sup> *Op. cit.* II. p. 365, d (7) (Hedderneim).

<sup>3</sup> *Op. cit.* II. p. 338, c (5) (Klagenfurt).

<sup>4</sup> *Op. cit.* II. p. 350, f (8) (Osterburken).

<sup>5</sup> *Op. cit.* I. p. 172.

<sup>6</sup> *Op. cit.* II. p. 272, c (2) (Serdica); II. pp. 303, 304, c (1) (Temesvar); II. p. 326, b (1) (Sissek).

<sup>7</sup> *Op. cit.* II. p. 337, c. (4) (Klagenfurt).

<sup>8</sup> *Op. cit.* I. p. 173.

<sup>9</sup> *Op. cit.* II. p. 201.

M. Cumont also suggests<sup>1</sup>, is to be connected with Tertullian's statement that in the initiation of the Mithraist to the degree of *miles* or soldier, he was offered at the sword's point a crown, which he cast away from him saying that Mithras was his crown. If so, it would afford some proof that the initiate here, as in the mysteries of Isis, was made to impersonate the sun, which is on other grounds likely enough.

We return to the scenes with the Bull, which here reach their climax. This is the sacrifice of the Bull by Mithras, which forms the central point of the whole legend. Its representation, generally in bas-relief, was displayed in the most conspicuous position in the apse of the Mithraic chapel, where it occupied the place of the modern altar-piece, and such art as the Roman sculptors succeeded in displaying was employed to make it as impressive and as striking as possible<sup>2</sup>. It shows the god grasping with his left hand the nostrils of the beast, and kneeling with his left knee in the middle of the Bull's back, while with his right hand he plunges the broad-bladed dagger with which he was armed at his birth into the Bull's shoulder<sup>3</sup>. A dog leaps forward to lap the blood flowing from the wound, while at the same time a scorpion seizes the Bull by the genitals. A serpent also forms part of the group, but his position varies in the different monuments, while that of the other animals does not. Sometimes, he lifts his head towards the blood, as if to share it with the dog, sometimes he is extended along the ground beneath the Bull's belly in apparent indifference to the tragedy enacted above him<sup>4</sup>. Before the Bull stands generally a youth clothed like Mithras himself in Phrygian cap, tunic, and mantle, as well as the anaxyrides or tight trousers in which the Greeks depicted most Easterns, while another youth similarly attired stands behind the dying victim. These two human figures are alike in every particular save that one of them

<sup>1</sup> Cumont, *op. cit.* I. p. 173, and n. 3.

<sup>2</sup> Most of the monuments show the remains of colour.

<sup>3</sup> Like the thrust of the Spanish bull-fighter which is supposed to split the heart.

<sup>4</sup> Sometimes, though very rarely, the serpent is absent, as in the Mithraeum discovered at Krotzenburg near Hanau. *Op. cit.* II. p. 353.

bears a torch upright with the flame pointing upwards, while the other holds a similar torch reversed so that the flame juts towards the earth. We know from a Latin inscription that the torch-bearer with uplifted torch was called *Cautes*, he with the reversed one *Cautopates*, but of neither name has any satisfactory derivation or etymology yet been discovered<sup>1</sup>.

The meaning of the group as a whole can, however, be explained by the documents of the later Persian religion. The *Bundahish* tells us that Ahura Mazda created before all things the Bull Goshurun, who was killed by Ahriman, the god of evil, and that from his side came forth Gayômort, first of men, while from his tail there issued useful seed-plants and trees, from his blood the vine, and from his seed the different kinds of beasts<sup>2</sup>. Save that the bull-slayer is here not the god of evil but the lord of light himself, the myth is evidently the same in the Mithraic bas-reliefs, for in some of the earliest monuments the Bull's tail is actually shown sprouting into ears of wheat, while in others the production of animals as a consequence of the Bull's death may be indicated, as well as the birth of the vine<sup>3</sup>. That the dog plays the part of the guardian of the Bull's soul is probable from what we know of later Persian beliefs<sup>4</sup>, while the scorpion as the creature of Ahriman may be here represented as poisoning the seed of future life at its source<sup>5</sup>. That Mithras is not supposed to kill the Bull from enmity or other personal reasons, but in obedience to orders from some higher power, is shown by the listening pose of his head during the sacrifice. This is M. Cumont's opinion<sup>6</sup>, as

<sup>1</sup> Cumont, *op. cit.* i. pp. 207, 208. Following the mention by Dionysius the Areopagite of a "threefold Mithras," M. Cumont thinks that the two torch-bearing figures are representations of Mithras himself. The theory is ingenious, but not very plausible. See *loc. cit.* pp. 208-213.

<sup>2</sup> *Op. cit.* i. p. 186, for authorities. Cf. Döllinger, *J. und H.* i. p. 420. Tiele, *Rel. of Iran. P.* pt i, p. 113, says that "originally" the bull was slain not by Ahriman, but by its creator.

<sup>3</sup> *Op. cit.* i. p. 197. Cf. Porphyry, *de antro nymphae.* c. xviii.

<sup>4</sup> D. Menant, "Les Rites Funéraires," *Conférences au Musée Guimet*, t. xxxv. pp. 181, 182.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Plutarch, *de Is. et Os.* c. xlvi.

<sup>6</sup> So Cumont, *T. et M.* i. pp. 182, 305.

also that the serpent here takes no active part in the affair, but is merely a symbolic representation of the earth<sup>1</sup>. The whole drama is clearly shown as taking place in a cave or grotto, as appears from the arch of rocks which surmounts, and, as it were, acts as a frame to, the Tauroctony or bull-slaying scene in most Mithraic chapels. This cave, according to Porphyry, represents the universe.

The Legend, however, does not end with the death of the Bull. In the chapel at Heddernheim, the great slab on which the Tauroctony is sculptured in bas-relief is pivoted so as to swing round and display on its other face another scene which we find repeated in a slightly different form on many monuments<sup>2</sup>. Mithras and the Sun-God are here shown as partaking of a ritual feast or banquet in which grapes seem to figure. At Heddernheim, the grapes are tendered to the two gods over the body of the dead bull by the two torch-bearing figures Cautes and Cautopates, while on an arch above them various quadrupeds, dogs, a boar, a sheep, and a cow, are seen springing into life. In other monuments, the same scene generally appears as a banquet at which Mithras and Helios are seated side by side at a table sometimes alone, but at others in company with different persons who can hardly be any other than initiates or worshippers<sup>3</sup>. That this represents some sort of sacrament where a drink giving immortality was administered seems probable, and its likeness to representations of the Last Supper is sufficient to explain the complaint of Justin Martyr and other Fathers that the devil had set on the Mithraists to imitate in this and other respects the Church of Christ<sup>4</sup>. The final scene of all comes when we see Mithras arresting the glorious chariot of the Sun-God drawn by four white horses, and, mounting therein, being driven off by the ray-crowned Helios himself to the abode of light above the firmament<sup>5</sup>. In this

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.* I. p. 192.

<sup>2</sup> *Op. cit.* II. Pl. VIII.

<sup>3</sup> *Op. cit.* I. p. 175, Fig. 10, where some of the guests at the banquet wear the masks of crows and other animals corresponding to the Mithraic degrees.

<sup>4</sup> Justin Martyr, *First Apology*, c. LVI.

<sup>5</sup> Cumont, *T. et M.* II. Pl. VIII, shows this most clearly. Pl. v (Neuenheim), Fig. 213, opposite p. 337 (Virunum), and p. 278, Fig. 121 (Orsova), leave no doubt possible.

also, it is easy to see a likeness between representations of the Ascension of Mithras and that of Elijah or even of Christ<sup>1</sup>.

However this may be, the Legend of Mithras, as thus portrayed, shows with fair closeness the belief of his worshippers as to his place in the scheme of the universe. Mithras was certainly not the Supreme God, a rank in the system filled by Ahura Mazda, or his Latin counterpart, Jupiter Best and Greatest<sup>2</sup>. But this being, like the Platonic Zeus and the Gnostic Bythos, was considered too great and too remote to concern himself with the doings of the visible universe, in which Mithras acts as his vicegerent. Whether Mithras was or was not considered as in some sort the double or antitype of the Supreme Being cannot be said; but it is worth noticing that in the Vedas, as among the Hittites, Varuna and Mitra form an inseparable couple who are always invoked together, and that the same seems to have been the case with Ahura Mazda and Mithra in the oldest religious literature of the Persians<sup>3</sup>. It may therefore well be that the learned doctors of the Mithraic theology regarded their Supreme Being and Mithras as two aspects of the same god, an idea that, as we have seen, was current at about the same period among the Gnostics. It is, however, impossible to speak with certainty on such a point in the absence of any writings by persons professing the Mithraic faith, and it is highly improbable that the rugged soldiers who formed the majority of the god's worshippers ever troubled themselves much about such questions. For them, no doubt, and for all, perhaps, but a few carefully-chosen persons, Mithras was the Demiurge or Divine Artizan of the universe<sup>4</sup>, which he governs in accordance with the laws of right and justice, protecting and defending alike man and those animals and plants useful to him which Mithras has himself created from his own spontaneous goodness. Hence he was the only god to whom they admitted allegiance, and although the existence

<sup>1</sup> Cumont, *op. cit.* i. p. 178, and Fig. 11.

<sup>2</sup> The Juppiter Optimus Maximus of the Palazzo Altieri. *Op. cit.* ii. p. 104.

<sup>3</sup> Darmesteter, *Ormuzd et Ahriman*, p. 65.

<sup>4</sup> Porphyry, *de antro nympharum*, c. xxiv.



of other heavenly beings was not denied, it is probable that most of them were looked upon as occupying at the best a position less important to us than that of Mithras himself.

It is probable, moreover, that all the scenes in the Mithraic sculptures in which we have seen the god taking part were considered as being enacted before the creation of man and in some heaven or world midway between the abode of Infinite Light and this earth. That the grotto into which Mithras drags the primordial Bull is no earthly cavern is plain from Porphyry's remark that the Mithraic cave was an image of the universe<sup>1</sup>, as well as from the band of zodiacal figures or the arch of rocks which sometimes encloses the bas-reliefs, the sky being looked upon by the Babylonians as a rocky vault. The sun and moon in their respective chariots also appear above the principal scene; and a further hint as to its whereabouts may be found in the fact that the flowing mantle of Mithras is sometimes depicted as spangled with stars, thereby indicating that the scenes in which he appears are supposed to take place in the starry firmament. Hence is explained the epithet of *μεσίτης* or Mediator, which Plutarch gives him<sup>2</sup>, and which should be interpreted not as intercessor but as he who occupies a position midway between two places<sup>3</sup>. That the higher of these in this case was the Garôtman or abode of Infinite Light of the Avestic literature, there can, it would seem, be no question; but what was the lower?

Although the statement must be guarded with all the reserves imposed upon us in all matters relating to the religion of Mithras by the absence of written documents, it is probable that this lower division of the universe was our earth. The monuments give us with fair certainty the Mithraic ideas as to how life was brought thither; but they tell us little or nothing as to the condition in which the earth was at the time, nor how it was supposed to have come into existence. Porphyry tells us that the "elements" (*στοιχεῖα*) were represented in the Mithraic chapel<sup>4</sup>, and we find in some examples of the bull-slaying scenes, the figures of a small lion and a crater or mixing-bowl beneath the belly of the bull, which M. Cumont

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.* cc. v. vi.

<sup>2</sup> Plutarch, *de Is. et Os.* c. XLVI.

<sup>3</sup> Porphyry, *de antro nymph.* c. XXIV.

<sup>4</sup> *Op. cit.* cc. v. vi.

considers to be the symbols of fire and water respectively; while the earth may be typified, as has been said above, by the serpent, and the fourth element or air may be indicated by the wind which is blowing Mithras' mantle away from his body and to the left of the group<sup>1</sup>. If this be so, it is probable that the Mithraist who thought about such matters looked upon the four elements, of which the ancients believed the world to be composed, as already in existence before the sacrifice of the primordial bull brought life upon the earth; and that the work of Mithras as Demiurge or Artizan was confined to arranging and moulding them into the form of the cosmos or ordered world. As to what was the ultimate origin of these elements, and whether the Mithraists, like the Gnostics, held that Matter had an existence independent of, and a nature opposed to, the Supreme Being, we have no indication whatever.

Of Mithraic eschatology or the view that the worshippers of Mithras held as to the end of the world, we know rather less than we do of their ideas as to its beginning. The Persian religion, after its reform under the Sassanid kings, taught that it would be consumed by fire<sup>2</sup>; and, as this doctrine of the Ecpyrosis, as the ancients called it, was also held by the Stoics, whose physical doctrines were then fashionable at Rome, it is probable enough that it entered into Mithraism also. But of this there is no proof, and M. Cumont's attempt to show that a similar conflagration was thought by the Mithraic priests to have taken place before the Tauroctony, and as a kind of paradigm or forecast of what was to come, is not very convincing<sup>3</sup>. Yet some glimpse of what was supposed to happen between the creation of the world and its destruction seems to

<sup>1</sup> Cumont, *T. et M.* i. pp. 198 *sqq.* Damascius (in Cory's *Ancient Fragments*, 1832, p. 319) attributes to the "Sidonians" a theogony which would make "Otos," said by Cory to mean the Night Raven, the *Noûs νοητός* born from Aer and Aura. Has this anything to do with the symbolism of the crow, found always as the attendant of Mithras at the Tauroctony?

<sup>2</sup> Söderblom, *La Vie Future d'après le Mazdéisme*, Paris, 1901, pp. 265, 266, for authorities. Cf. Casartelli, *La Philosophie Religieuse du Mazdéisme*, p. 186.

<sup>3</sup> Cumont, *T. et M.* i. p. 168. He relies on a fragment of Dion Chrysostom which does not appear to have this meaning. See *ibid.* ii. p. 64.

be typified by a monstrous figure often found in the ruined chapels once used for the Mithraic worship, where it seems to have been carefully guarded from the eyes of the general body of worshippers. This monster had the body of a man<sup>1</sup> with the head of a lion, while round his body is twined a huge serpent, whose head either appears on the top of the lion's or rests on the human breast. On the monster's back appear sometimes two, but generally four wings, and in his hands he bears upright two large keys, for one of which a sceptre is sometimes substituted; while his feet are sometimes human, sometimes those of a crocodile or other reptile. On his body, between the folds of the serpent, there sometimes appear the signs of the four quarters of the year, *i.e.* Aries and Libra, Cancer and Capricorn<sup>2</sup>, and in other examples a thunderbolt on the breast or on the right knee<sup>3</sup>. The figure is often mounted on a globe which bears in one instance the two crossed bands which show that it is intended for our earth, and in one curious instance he appears to bear a flaming torch in each hand, while his breath is kindling a flame which is seen rising from an altar beside him<sup>4</sup>. It is possible that in this last we have a symbolical representation of the Ecpyrosis. Lastly, in the Mithraic chapel at Hedderheim, which is the only one where the figure of the lion-headed monster was found *in situ*, it was concealed within a deep niche or cell so fashioned, says M. Cumont, that the statue could only be perceived through a little conical aperture or peep-hole made in the slab of basalt closing the niche<sup>5</sup>.

M. Cumont's theory, as given in his magnificent work on

<sup>1</sup> M. Cumont, *op. cit.* i. p. 82, says that the sex is left undecided, so as to show that Infinite Time, the Supreme God according to him of the Mithraic pantheon, can produce by himself. This is certainly not the case with one of the statues given among his own monuments (*op. cit.* ii. p. 213, Fig. 44), or that lately recovered from the Mithraeum at Sidon, for which see Pottier, "La Collection Louis de Clercq," *Conférences au Musée Guimet*, Bibl. de Vulg. t. xix. 1906, Pl. opp. p. 236, or *P.S.B.A.* 1912, Pl. xix, Fig. 18, or Cumont, *Les Mystères de Mithra*, Bruxelles, 1913, p. 235.

<sup>2</sup> Cumont, *T. et M.* ii. p. 213, Figs. 43, 44.

<sup>3</sup> *Op. cit.* ii. p. 216, Fig. 47; p. 238, Fig. 68; p. 259, Fig. 96.

<sup>4</sup> *Op. cit.* ii. p. 196, Fig. 22. A hole in the back of the head, made apparently for "fire-breathing" purposes, was found in the Sidon statue also. See Cumont, *Les Mystères*, fig. 27.

<sup>5</sup> *T. et M.* ii. p. 375.

the *Mystères de Mithra* and elsewhere, is that the figure represents that Zervan Akerene or Boundless Time whom he would put at the head of the Mithraic pantheon, and would make the father of both Ormuzd and Ahriman<sup>1</sup>. M. Cumont's opinion, on a subject of which he has made himself the master, must always command every respect, and it may be admitted that the notion of such a supreme Being, corresponding in many ways to the Ineffable Bythos of the Gnostics, did appear in the later developments of the Persian religion, and may even have been known during the time that the worship of Mithras flourished in the West<sup>2</sup>. It has been shown elsewhere, however, that this idea only came to the front long after the cult of Mithras had become extinct, that M. Cumont's view that the lion-headed monster was represented as without sex or passions has been shown to be baseless by later discoveries, and that the figure is connected in at least one example with an inscription to Arimanes or Ahriman<sup>3</sup>. M. Cumont has himself noted the confusion which a Christian, writing before the abolition of the Mithras worship, makes between the statues of Hecate, goddess of hell and patroness of sorcerers, and those of the lion-headed monster<sup>4</sup>, and Hecate's epithet of *Περσεΐη* can only be explained by some similar association<sup>5</sup>. At the same time, M. Cumont makes it plain that the Mithraists did not regard these infernal powers Ahriman and Hecate with the horror and loathing which the reformed Zoroastrian religion afterwards heaped upon the antagonist of Ormuzd<sup>6</sup>. On the contrary the dedications of

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.* I. p. 78.

<sup>2</sup> The only evidence that he produces of this last fact is a quotation from Damascius, whose authority seems to be "Eudemus the Peripatetic," given in n. 4, p. 236 *supra*, that some of the Magi call the *νοητὸν ἄπαν καὶ τὸ ἠνωμένον* Topos and others Chronos. A good divinity and an evil demon according to the same author descend from this power, one of whom he says is called Oromasdes and the other Arimanius. It is not very clear how much of this is Eudemus and how much Damascius. No other author gives any hint that would allow us to attribute so early an age to Zervanism.

<sup>3</sup> *P.S.B.A.* 1912, pp. 139-142.

<sup>4</sup> Firmicus Maternus, *de errore*, c. iv. See Cumont, *T. et M.* I. p. 140, n. 7.

<sup>5</sup> They are mentioned together in the great Magical Papyrus of the Bibliothèque Nationale at Paris, Wessely, *Griechische Zauberp.* p. 73.

<sup>6</sup> Cumont, *T. et M.* I. p. 141.

several altars and statues show that they paid them worship and offered them sacrifices, as the Greeks did to Hades and Persephone, the lord and lady of hell, of whom the Mithraists probably considered them the Persian equivalents. From all these facts, the conclusion seems inevitable that the lion-headed monster represents Ahriman, the consort of Hecate<sup>1</sup>.

If we now look at the religious literature of the time when the worship of Mithras was coming into favour, we find a pretty general consensus of opinion that the chthonian or infernal god represented in the earlier Persian religion by this Ahriman, was a power who might be the rival of, but was not necessarily the mortal enemy of Zeus. Whether Neander be right or not in asserting that the prevailing tendency of the age was towards Dualism<sup>2</sup>, it is certain that most civilized nations had then come to the conclusion that on this earth the bad is always mixed up with the good. Plutarch puts this clearly enough when he says that nature here below comes not from one, but from two opposed principles and contending powers, and this opinion, he tells us, is a most ancient one which has come down from expounders of myths (*θεολόγοι*) and legislators to poets and philosophers, and is expressed "not in words and phrases, but in mysteries and sacrifices, and has been found in many places among both Barbarians and Greeks<sup>3</sup>." The same idea of antagonistic powers is, of course, put in a much stronger form in the reformed Persian religion, where the incursion of Ahriman into the kingdom of Ormuzd brings upon the earth all evil in the shape of winter, prolonged drought, storms, disease, and beasts and plants hurtful to man<sup>4</sup>. But this does not seem to have been the view of Ahriman's functions taken by the older Magism, whence the worship of Mithras was probably derived<sup>5</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> The absence of any corresponding statue of the goddess is perhaps accounted for by the misogynic character of the Mithraic worship. Yet an empty niche corresponding to the one containing the lion-headed figure appears in some Mithraea.

<sup>2</sup> Neander, *Ch. Hist.* II. p. 7 and note.

<sup>3</sup> Plutarch, *de Is. et Os.* c. XLV.

<sup>4</sup> Cumont, *T. et M.* I. p. 5, quoting West, *Pahlavi Texts*, Pt v. p. xxvi, 50.

<sup>5</sup> F. Rosenberg, *Le Livre de Zoroastre*, St Petersburg, I. p. 10, and n. 3, says that the reform of Zoroaster was specially directed to the abolition of the worship of Ahriman.

In Mithraism, it is not Ahriman, as in the *Bundahish*, but Mithras, the vicegerent of Ormuzd, who slays the mystic Bull, and by so doing he brings good and not evil to the earth. Nowhere do we find in the Mithraic sculptures any allusion to Ahriman as a god of evil pure and simple, or as one who is for ever opposed to the heavenly powers. We do, indeed, find in several Mithraea representations of a Titanomachia where the Titans, represented as men with serpent legs, are depicted as fleeing before a god like the Greek Zeus who strikes them with his thunderbolts<sup>1</sup>. But this is not more necessarily suggestive of two irreconcilable principles than the Greek story of the Titans, those sons of Earth who were persuaded by their mother to make war upon their father Uranos, who put their brother Kronos upon his throne, and who were in their turn hurled from heaven by Kronos' son Zeus. Even if we do not accept the later myth which reconciles Zeus to his adversaries<sup>2</sup>, the story does not go further than to say that the Titans attempted to gain heaven and were thrust back to their own proper dwelling-place, the earth.

It is in this way, as it would seem, that the lion-headed monster of the Mithraic chapels must be explained. Ahriman, the god girt with the serpent which represents the earth, has rebelled against Ormuzd or Jupiter, and has been marked with the thunderbolt which has cast him down from heaven. But he remains none the less lord of his own domain, the earth, his sway over which is shown by the sceptre which he wields while standing upon it<sup>3</sup>. As for the keys which he bears, they are doubtless those of the gates behind which he keeps the souls and bodies of men, as the Orphics said, imprisoned, until he is compelled to release them by a higher power<sup>4</sup>. In all this,

<sup>1</sup> Cumont, *T. et M.* II. Monument 246, e (5) Osterburken, and others as in t. I. p. 157 and n. 3. Cf. also Pl. xvi, Fig. 7, in *P.S.B.A.* 1912.

<sup>2</sup> The Orphic invocation of the Titans referred to in Chap. IV, vol. I. p. 116, n. 3 *supra* can be thus explained.

<sup>3</sup> Cumont, *T. et M.* II. p. 215, Fig. 46 (Pl. xviii, Fig. 13 of *P.S.B.A.* 1912); II. p. 238, Fig. 68 (Pl. xviii, Fig. 15 of *P.S.B.A.* 1912).

<sup>4</sup> So in the leaden *diærae* from Cyprus now in the British Museum the Lord of Hell is invoked as "the god who is set over the gate of hell and the keys of heaven." *P.S.B.A.* t. XIII., 1891, p. 177.

his functions do not go beyond those of the Greek Hades, with whom Plutarch equates him.

It is however, possible that he was conceived by the Mithraists as occupying a slightly different place in the material universe from that of his Greek prototype. The true realm of Hades was generally placed by the Greeks below the earth, but that of the Mithraic Ahriman may possibly be just outside it. M. Cumont shows many reasons for supposing the lion-headed god to be connected with the idea of destiny<sup>1</sup>, and in one of the very few contemporary writings which make distinct allusion to the Mithraic tenets, there is something which confirms this view. This occurs in a fragment embedded, as it were, in a Magic Payprus or sorcerer's handbook now in the Bibliothèque Nationale at Paris<sup>2</sup>. The document itself is probably not, as Prof. Albert Dieterich has too boldly asserted, a "Mithraic Liturgy"; but it is evidently connected in some way with the Mithraic worship and begins with a statement that the writer is a priest who has received inspiration from "the great Sun-God Mithras." M. Georges Lafaye is of opinion that it narrates in apocalyptic fashion the adventures of the soul of a perfect Mithraist on its way to heaven, and this is probably correct, although it is here told for no purpose of edification but as a spell or charm<sup>3</sup>. The soul, if it be indeed she who is speaking, repeatedly complains to the gods whom she meets—including one in white tunic, crimson mantle and anaxyrides or Persian trousers who may be Mithras himself—of "the harsh and inexorable necessity" which has been compelling her so long as she remained in the "lower nature"<sup>4</sup>. But the Sphere of Destiny or necessity, as we have seen in the *Pistis Sophia*, was thought to be the one immediately surrounding the earth, and although the document in which we have before met with this idea belongs to a different set of religious beliefs than those

<sup>1</sup> Cumont, *T. et M.* I. p. 294.

<sup>2</sup> Wessely, *Griechische Zauberp.* pp. 32 sqq.

<sup>3</sup> Georges Lafaye, "L'Initiation Mithriaque," *Conférences au Musée Guimet*, t. XVIII. 1906, pp. 98 sqq.

<sup>4</sup> Wessely, *Gr. Zauberp.* p. cit. in note 2 *supra*, and Lafaye, *op. cit. passim*.

here treated of, it is probable that both Gnostic and Mithraist drew it from the astrological theories current at the time which came into the Hellenistic world from Babylon. It is therefore extremely probable that the Mithraists figured Ahriman as ruling the earth from the sphere immediately outside it, and this would agree well with his position *upon* the globe in the monuments where he appears. It is some confirmation of this that, in another part of the Papyrus just quoted, the "World-ruler" (Cosmocrator) is invoked as "the Great Serpent, leader of these gods, who holds the source of Egypt [Qy, The Nile?] and the end of the whole inhabited world [in his hands], who begets in Ocean Pshoi (*i.e.* Fate) the god of gods<sup>1</sup>"; while the Great Dragon or Outer Darkness in the *Pistis Sophia* is said to surround the earth. That both orthodox Christians and Gnostics like the Valentinians looked upon the Devil, who, as lord of hell, was sometimes identified with Hades, as the Cosmocrator or World-Ruler requires no further demonstration<sup>2</sup>, and in this particular as in others the Mithraists may have drawn from the same source as the Gnostic teachers<sup>3</sup>.

That they did so in a related matter can be shown by direct evidence. Like the Ophites of the Diagram before described, the Mithraists thought that the soul descended to the body through seven spheres which were those of the "planets" Saturn, Venus, Jupiter, Mercury, Mars, the Moon, and the Sun in that order, which Origen, who mentions the fact, says that the Persian theology declared to be symbolized "by the names of the rest of matter," and also gave for it "musical reasons<sup>4</sup>." He further describes the different qualities which the soul in her passage receives from each sphere, and which it seems fair to conclude she gives back to them on her reascension. M. Cumont is no doubt right when he attributes the origin of

<sup>1</sup> Wessely, *op. cit.* p. 61.

<sup>2</sup> See Chapter IX, p. 108 *supra*.

<sup>3</sup> Lafaye, *L'In. Mith.* pp. 111, 112, goes further and says that both Gnostics and Manichaeans derived their doctrine from Mithraism, which formed a half-way house between Paganism and Christianity. But see Chapter XIII, *infra*.

<sup>4</sup> Origen, *adv. Cels.* Bk VI. c. 22. For "musical" there should probably be read mystical, the  $\tau$  being easily omitted by a copyist.



this tenet to the *mathematici* or astrologers and says that it too came originally from Chaldaea<sup>1</sup>. The seven heavens are also found in many Oriental documents of the time, including the *Book of the Secrets of Enoch*<sup>2</sup> and the *Apocalypse of Baruch*<sup>3</sup>. According to Origen, they were symbolized in the Mithraic chapels by a ladder of eight steps, the first seven being of the metals peculiar to the different planets, *i.e.* lead, tin, copper, iron, an alloy of several metals, silver, and gold, with the eighth step representing the heaven of the fixed stars<sup>4</sup>. The Stoics who held similar views, following therein perhaps the Platonic cosmogony, had already fixed the gate of the sky through which the souls left the heaven of the fixed stars on their descent to the earth in Cancer, and that by which they reascended in Capricorn<sup>5</sup>, which probably accounts for the two keys borne by the lion-headed god on the Mithraic monuments, and for those two Zodiacal signs being displayed on his body. The other two signs, *viz.* Aries and Libra, may possibly refer to the places in a horoscope or genethliacal figure which the astrologers of the time called the *Porta laboris* and *Janua Ditis* respectively, as denoting the gate by which man "born to labour" enters life, and the "gate of Hades" by which he leaves it<sup>6</sup>. If, as Porphyry says, the doctrine of metempsychosis formed part of the Mithraic teaching, the keys would thus have a meaning analogous to the Orphic release from "the wheel".

The other gods who appear on the Mithraic monuments are those known to us in classical mythology and are represented under the usual human forms made familiar by Greek and Roman art. By the side of, but in a subordinate position to Jupiter, we find, if M. Cumont be justified in his identifications,

<sup>1</sup> Cumont, *T. et M.* I. p. 38.

<sup>2</sup> Charles, *Bk of the Secrets of Enoch*, pp. xxx sqq.

<sup>3</sup> The Greek Apocalypse of Baruch, published by James in *Cambridge Texts and Studies*, vol. v. No. 1, p. 44.

<sup>4</sup> *adv. Cels.* Bk vi. c. 22. He has, however, got the order wrong, as copper is generally associated with the planet Venus, tin with Jupiter, iron with Mars, silver with the Moon, gold with the Sun, and lead with Saturn.

<sup>5</sup> Bouché Leclercq, *L'Astrologie Grecque*, p. 23, for authorities.

<sup>6</sup> *Op. cit.* p. 276. Cf. Cumont, *T. et M.* I. p. 40.

<sup>7</sup> Porphyry, *de Abstinencia*, Bk iv. c. 16.

nearly all the "great gods" of the Greco-Roman pantheon. Five of these, that is to say, Jupiter himself, Saturn, Mars, Venus, and Mercury may be intended as symbols of the planets which, then as now, bore these names. But there are others such as Juno, Neptune and Amphitrite, Pluto and Proserpine, Apollo, Vulcan, and Hercules who cannot by any possibility be considered as planetary signs<sup>1</sup>. M. Cumont's theory about these divinities is, if one understands him rightly, that these are really Persian or Avestic gods, such as Verethragna, represented under the classic forms of their Greek counterparts to make them attractive to their Roman worshippers<sup>2</sup>. This does not seem very probable, because the Persians did not figure their gods in human form<sup>3</sup>. Nor is there any reason to think that the Mithraists confined themselves to the *theocrasia* or the practice of discovering their own gods in the divinities of the peoples around them which we have seen so rife in Greece, Italy, and Egypt. But in the age when the worship of Mithras became popular in the Roman Empire, all paganism was groping its way towards a religion which should include and conciliate all others, and there is much evidence that the votaries of Mithras were especially determined that this religion should be their own. Isis, as we have seen, might proclaim herself as the one divinity whom under many names and in many forms the whole earth adored; but the Mithraists apparently went further and tried to show that their religion contained within itself all the rest. They appear to have first gained access to Rome under an alliance with the priests of Cybele, whose image, with its emasculated attendants the Galli, was transported from Pergamum to the Eternal City during the critical moments of the Second Punic War<sup>4</sup>. Externally there were many analogies between the two cults, and Cybele's consort Attis, like Mithras, was always represented in a Phrygian cap and anaxyrides. One of the most

<sup>1</sup> Cumont, *T. et M.* I. p. 129, n. 6, for list of monuments.

<sup>2</sup> *Op. et loc. cit.*; *id. Rel. Or.* p. 179.

<sup>3</sup> See p. 234, *supra*. The figure of the divine archer in the winged disk which figured on the coins called darics is, perhaps, the exception which proves the rule. Or is this meant for the Fravashi or genius of the king? Cf. Hope Moulton, *Early Zoroastrianism*, p. 260.

<sup>4</sup> Somewhere about 204 B.C. See Cumont, *Rel. Or.* p. 58.

impressive, if most disgusting practices in the religion of Cybele—the Taurobolium or blood-bath in which a bull was slaughtered over a pit covered with planks pierced with holes through which the blood of the victim dripped upon the naked votary below—was borrowed by the Mithraists, and many of them boast on their funereal inscriptions that they have undergone this ceremony and thereby, as they express it, have been “born again.” The *clarissimi* and high officials of the Empire who have left records of the kind are careful to note that they are worshippers of “the Great Mother” (Cybele) and Attis, as well as of Mithras<sup>1</sup>, and a similar statement occurs so frequently on the funereal and other inscriptions of their wives as to lead to the hypothesis that the ceremonies of the Phrygian Goddess were the natural refuge of Mithras’ female votaries<sup>2</sup>. So, too, the worship of the Alexandrian divinities, which that of Mithras in some sort supplanted, and which, as being as popular in the Greek world as the last-named was in the Latin, might have been expected to be hostile to it, yet had relations with it not very easy to be understood. In the assembly of the gods which in some of the monuments crowns the arch set over the Tauroctony, the central place is in one instance taken by Sarapis with the distinctive *modius* on his head instead of Zeus or Jupiter<sup>3</sup>, the same priest often describes himself as serving the altars of both gods, and “Zeus, Helios, Mithras, Sarapis, unconquered one!” is invoked in one of those spells in the Magic Papyri which contain fragments of ritual prayers or hymns<sup>4</sup>. Possibly it is for this reason, that the initiating priest in Apuleius’ story whom the grateful Lucius says he regards as his father, is named

<sup>1</sup> Orelli, *Inscpt. Latinar. selectar.* Turin, 1828, vol. I. pp. 406–412.

<sup>2</sup> See Cumont, *T. et M.* II. p. 95, inscr. 15, p. 98, inscr. 23; p. 100 inscr. 40; p. 101, inscr. 41. The tomb of Vincentius in the Catacomb of Praetextatus at Rome would show an instance of the joint worship of Sabazius, the consort of the Great Mother, and of Mithras, if we could trust Garrucci’s restoration, for which see his *Les Mystères du Syncretisme Phrygien*, Paris, 1854. It has been quoted in this sense by Hatch, *H.L.* p. 290; but Cumont, *T. et M.* II. pp. 173 and 413, argues against this construction. For the pictures themselves, see Maass, *Orpheus*, München, 1895, pp. 221, 222.

<sup>3</sup> Cumont, *T. et M.* II. p. 261, Fig. 99.    <sup>4</sup> Kenyon, *Gk Papyri*, p. 65.

Mithras, as if the initiate had been led to the Mysteries of Isis through the worship of that god<sup>1</sup>.

The same syncretistic tendency is particularly marked in the leaning of the Mithraists to the worship of the gods of Eleusis. "Consecrated to Liber [the Latin name of Dionysos] and the Eleusinian [goddesses]," "Mystes of Ceres," "priest" or "Chief Herdsman (*archibucolus*) of the god Liber," "hierophant of Father Liber and the Hecates," "Consecrated at Eleusis to the god Bacchus, Ceres, and Cora" are some of the distinctions which the devotees of Mithras vaunt on their tombstones<sup>2</sup>; while we learn that when the last survivors of the two sacred families who had for centuries furnished priests to the Eleusinian Mysteries died out, the Athenians sent for a priest of Mithras from one of the neighbouring islands, and handed over to him the care of the sacred rites<sup>3</sup>. It is even possible that the complaisance of the Mithraists for other religions went further than has hitherto been suspected. Not only does Justin Martyr after describing the celebration of the Christian Eucharist say,

"Wherefore also the evil demons in mimicry have handed down that the same thing should be done in the Mysteries of Mithras. For that bread and a cup of water are in these mysteries set before the initiate with certain speeches you either know or can learn<sup>4</sup>";

but we know from Porphyry that the initiate into the rites of Mithras underwent a baptism by total immersion which was said to expiate his sins<sup>5</sup>. Among the worshippers of Mithras, on the same authority, were also virgins and others vowed to continence<sup>6</sup>, and we hear that the Mithraists used, like the

<sup>1</sup> This is the more likely because his second initiator bears the name of Asinius, which, as he himself says (Apuleius, *Metamorph.* Bk. xi. c. 27), was not unconnected with his own transformation into the shape of an ass. The Emperor Commodus was initiated into both religions (Lamprius, *Commodus*, c. ix.).

<sup>2</sup> See n. 1, p. 259, *supra*.

<sup>3</sup> Dill, *Nero to Marcus Aurelius*, p. 625, n. 3, quoting Gasquet, *Mithras*, p. 137. See also Gibbon, vol. iii. p. 498, Bury (Appendix 15).

<sup>4</sup> Justin Martyr, *First Apology*, c. lxvi.

<sup>5</sup> Porphyry, *de antro nymph.* c. 15. Tertullian, *de Praescpt.* c. 40.

<sup>6</sup> Porphyry, *op. et loc. cit.*

Christians, to call each other "Brother" and address their priests as "Father<sup>1</sup>." St Augustine tells us that in his time the priests of Mithras were in the habit of saying, "That One in the Cap [*i.e.* Mithras] is a Christian too!" and it is not unlikely that the claim was seriously made<sup>2</sup>. During the reigns of the Second Flavian Emperors and before Constantine's pact with the Church, we hear of hymns sung by the legionaries which could be chanted in common by Christians, Mithraists, and the worshippers of that Sun-God the adoration of whom was hereditary or traditional in the Flavian House<sup>3</sup>. The Mithraists also observed Sunday and kept sacred the 25th of December as the birthday of the sun<sup>4</sup>.

Of the other rites and ceremonies used in the worship of Mithras we know next to nothing. As appears from the authors last quoted, the whole of the worship was conducted in "mysteries" or secret ceremonies like the Eleusinian and the rites of the Alexandrian divinities, although on a more extended scale. The Mithraic mysteries always took place in a subterranean vault or "cave," lighted only by artificial light. The ruins of many of these have been found, and are generally so small as to be able to accommodate only a few worshippers<sup>5</sup>, whence perhaps it followed that there were often several Mithraea in the same town or city<sup>6</sup>. The chief feature seems to have been always the scene of the Tauroctony or Bull-slaying which was displayed on the apse or further end of the chapel, and was generally carved in bas-relief although occasionally rendered in the round. The effect of this was sought to be

<sup>1</sup> See Cumont, *T. et M.* i. p. 339, for authorities.

<sup>2</sup> Augustine, *In Johann. evang. tractatus*, vii. or Cumont, *T. et M.* ii. p. 59. This last thinks it more probable that the passage refers to Attis, as there is an allusion in it to redemption by blood. But this would hardly apply to the self-mutilation of the Galli, while it would to the blood-bath of the Taurobolium and Criobolium which so many high initiates of Mithras boast of undergoing.

<sup>3</sup> J. Maurice, "La Dynastie Solaire des Seconds Flaviens," *Rev. Archeol.* t. xvii. (1911), p. 397 and n. 1.

<sup>4</sup> Cumont, *T. et M.* i. p. 339, quoting Minucius Felix.

<sup>5</sup> *Op. cit.* i. p. 65.

<sup>6</sup> The remains of five Mithraea were found in Ostia alone.

heightened by brilliant colouring, perhaps made necessary by the dim light, and there were certainly altars of the square or triangular pedestal type, and a well or other source from which water could be obtained. The benches for the worshippers were of stone and ran at right angles to and on either side of the Tauroctony, so as to resemble the choir stalls in the chancel of a modern church<sup>1</sup>. We have seen that the lion-headed figure was concealed from the eyes of the worshippers, and we know that they used to kneel during at least part of the service, which was not in accord with the practice of either the Greeks or Romans, who were accustomed to stand with upturned palms when praying to the gods<sup>2</sup>. Sacrifices of animals which, if we may judge from the débris left in some of the chapels, were generally birds<sup>3</sup>, seem to have been made; but there is no reason to believe the accusation sometimes brought against the Mithraists that they also slaughtered human victims in honour of their god. Lampridius tells us, on the other hand, that the Emperor Commodus on his initiation sullied the temple by converting a feigned into a real murder<sup>4</sup>, and we hear from another and later source that in consequence of this only a bloody sword was shown to the candidate<sup>5</sup>. It seems therefore that somebody was supposed to suffer death during the ceremony, perhaps under the same circumstances as already suggested in the kindred case of the Alexandrian Mysteries<sup>6</sup>.

We are a little better informed as to the degrees of initiation, which numbered seven. The initiate ascended from the degree of Crow (*corax*), which was the first or lowest, to that of Father (*Pater*), which was the seventh or highest, by passing successively

<sup>1</sup> Cumont, *T. et M.* II. p. 204, Fig. 30, and p. 493, Fig. 430; or *P.S.B.A.* 1912, Pl. XIII. Figs. 1 and 2.

<sup>2</sup> Cumont, *T. et M.* I. p. 62.

<sup>3</sup> The story quoted from Pseudo-Augustine (Cumont, *op. cit.* I. p. 322) about the hands of the initiates being bound with chickens' guts which were afterwards severed by a sword might account for the number of birds' bones.

<sup>4</sup> Cumont, *op. cit.* II. p. 21, gives the passage from Lampridius mentioned in n. 1, p. 260, *supra*.

<sup>5</sup> *Op. cit.* I. p. 322, quoting Zacharius rhetor.

<sup>6</sup> See Chapter II, Vol. I. p. 62, *supra*.

through the intermediate degrees of Man of the Secret (*Cryphius*), Soldier (*Miles*), Lion (*Leo*), Persian (*Perses*), and Courier of the Sun (*Heliodromus*)<sup>1</sup>. It would seem that either he, or the initiating priests, or perhaps the other assistants, had to assume disguises consisting of masks corresponding to the animals named in the first and fourth of these degrees, and to make noises like the croaking of birds and the roaring of lions<sup>2</sup>. These rightly recall to M. Cumont the names of animals borne by initiates or priests in other religions in Greece and Asia Minor and may be referred to totemistic times. We also know from a chance allusion of Tertullian that on being admitted to the degree of soldier, the initiate was offered a crown or garland at the point of a sword, which he put away from him with the speech, "Mithras is my crown!", and that never thereafter might he wear a garland even at a feast<sup>3</sup>. Porphyry, too, tells us that in the degree of Lion, the initiate's hands and lips were purified with honey. It has also been said by the Fathers that before or during initiation, the candidate had to undergo certain trials or tortures, to swim rivers, plunge through fire, and to jump from apparently vast heights<sup>4</sup>; but it is evident from the small size of the Mithraea or chapels which have come down to us that these experiences would have demanded much more elaborate preparation than there was space for, and, if they were ever enacted, were probably as purely "make-believe" as the supposed murder just mentioned and some of the initiatory ceremonies in certain societies of the present day<sup>5</sup>. Lastly, there is no doubt that women were strictly excluded from all the ceremonies of the cult, thereby justifying in some

<sup>1</sup> Cumont, *T. et M.* II. p. 18, for the passage in St Jerome in which these degrees are enumerated. They all appear in the inscriptions given by Cumont, except that of Miles or Soldier. An inscription by two "soldiers" of Mithras has, however, lately been found at Patras and published by its discoverers, M. Charles Avezou and M. Charles Picard. See *R.H.R.* t. LXIV. (1911), pp. 179-183.

<sup>2</sup> Cumont, *T. et M.* I. pp. 315 sqq.

<sup>3</sup> Tertullian, *de Corona*, c. 15.

<sup>4</sup> Porphyry, *de antro nymph.* c. 15.

<sup>5</sup> Cumont, *T. et M.* I. p. 322. Gregory of Nazianza (A.D. 320-390) is the first authority for these tortures (*κολάσεις*) in point of time. Nonnus the Mythographer gives more details, but is three centuries later.

sort the remark of Renan that Mithraism was a "Pagan Freemasonry<sup>1</sup>."

It has also been said that the true inwardness and faith of the religion of Mithras was in these mysteries only gradually and with great caution revealed to the initiates, whose fitness for them was tested at every step<sup>2</sup>. It may be so, but it is plain that the Mithraist was informed at the outset of at least a good many of the tenets of the faith. The whole Legend of Mithras, so far as we know it, must have been known to the initiate soon after entering the Mithraic chapel, since we have ourselves gathered it mainly from the different scenes depicted on the borders of the great central group of the Tauroctony. So, too, the mystic banquet or Mithraic Sacrament which, if the Heddernheim monuments stood alone, we might consider was concealed from the eyes of the lower initiates until the proper moment came, also forms one of the subsidiary scenes of the great altar piece in the chapels at Sarmizegetusa, Bononia and many other places<sup>3</sup>. In a bas-relief at Sarrebourg, moreover, the two principal persons at the banquet, *i.e.* Mithras and the Sun, are shown surrounded by other figures wearing the masks of crows and perhaps lions<sup>4</sup>, which looks as if initiates of all grades were admitted to the sacramental banquet. One can therefore make no profitable conjecture as to what particular doctrines were taught in the particular degrees, though there seems much likelihood in M. Cumont's statement that the initiates were thought to take rank in the next world according to the degree that they had received in this<sup>5</sup>. The belief that "those who have received humble mysteries shall have humble places and those that have received exalted mysteries exalted places" in the next world was, we may be sure, too profitable a one for the priests of Mithras to be neglected by them. It

<sup>1</sup> Renan, *Marc-Aurèle*, p. 577.

<sup>2</sup> Cumont, *T. et M.* I. p. 73.

<sup>3</sup> *Op. cit.* II. p. 294, Fig. 149; p. 298, Fig. 154; p. 300, Fig. 156; p. 304, Fig. 161; p. 488, Fig. 421.

<sup>4</sup> *Op. cit.* I. p. 175, Fig. 10.

<sup>5</sup> *Op. cit.* I. p. 39, n. 6, quoting the *Arda Viraf namak*. A quotation from Arnobius, *adv. gentes*, which follows, merely says that the Magi boast of their ability to smooth the believers' passage to heaven.



certainly explains the extraordinary order for the planetary spheres adopted by Origen<sup>1</sup>, according to which the souls which had taken the lowest degree would go to the heaven of Saturn, slowest and most unlucky of the planets, while those perfected in the faith would enter the glorious house of the Sun.

Whether they were thought to go further still, we can only guess. It should be noticed that the mystic ladder of Mithras had *eight* steps, and we have seen that when the soul had climbed through the seven planetary spheres there was still before her the heaven of the fixed stars. The Sun seems in Origen's account of the Mithraic faith to have formed the last world to be traversed before this highest heaven could be reached; and it was through the disk of the Sun that the ancients thought the gods descended to and reascended from the earth. This idea appears plainly in the Papyrus quoted above, where the Mithraist is represented as an eagle who flies upwards "and alone" to heaven and there beholds all things<sup>2</sup>. He prays that he may, in spite of his mortal and corruptible nature, behold with immortal eyes after having been hallowed with holy hallowings, "the deathless aeon, lord of the fiery crowns," and that "the corruptible nature of mortals" which has been imposed upon him by "inexorable Necessity" may depart from him. "Then," says the author of the fragment—which, it will be remembered, claims to be a revelation given by the archangel of the great Sun-God Mithras—the initiate "will see the gods who rule each day and hour ascending to heaven and others descending, and the path of the visible gods through the disk of the god my father will appear." He describes the machinery of nature by which the winds are produced, which seems to be figured on some of the Mithraic monuments, and which reminds one of the physics supposed to be revealed in

<sup>1</sup> See Chap. VIII, p. 74, n. 3, *supra*.

<sup>2</sup> That those who had taken the degree of Pater were called *æroi* or eagles appears from Porphyry, *de Abstinentia*, Bk. iv. c. 16. Cumont doubts this; see *T. et M.* I. p. 314, n. 8. The idea probably had its origin in the belief common to classical antiquity that the eagle alone could fly to the sun, from which the Mithraist thought that the souls of men came, and to which those of perfect initiates would return. Cf. *op. cit.* I. p. 291.

the Enochian literature. Then, after certain spells have been recited, the initiate sees the disk of the Sun, which opens, disclosing "doors of fire and the world of the gods within them." Then follow more invocations to the gods of the seven planetary worlds who appear in due course, and presumably give him admission to their realms. After another invocation, in what may possibly be some Asianic or Anatolian language very much corrupted, the initiate beholds "a young god, beautiful, with fiery hair, in white tunic and purple mantle, and having on his head a crown of fire," who seems to be Helios or Sol, the driver of the sun's chariot on the Mithraic monuments. He is saluted as "Mighty in strength, mighty ruler, greatest king of gods! O Sun, lord of heaven and earth, God of Gods!" Next appear "seven virgins in linen robes having the heads of serpents," who are called "the seven Fortunes of heaven" and are, as M. Georges Lafaye surmises, the seven stars of the constellation of the Great Bear<sup>1</sup>. They are followed by seven male gods also dressed in linen robes and with golden crowns, but equipped with the heads of black bulls, who are called "the rulers of the Pole." These are they, we are told, who send upon the impious thunders and lightnings and earthquakes. And so we are led at last to the apparition of "a god of extraordinary stature, having a glance of fire, young and golden-haired, in white tunic and golden crown, clothed in anaxyrides, holding in his right hand the golden shoulder of a young bull." This, *i.e.* the shoulder, we are told, is called "Arctos, who moves the sky, making it to turn forwards and backwards according to the hour." But the god appears to be intended for Mithras, and the shoulder of the bull is probably an allusion to the bull-slaying scene which may serve to show that there were more interpretations than one placed upon the Tauroctony. The initiate hails this god as "Lord of water, consecrator of the earth, ruler of the air, shining-rayed One, of primeval rays!" and the like, and continues:

"O Lord, having been born again, I die! Having increased and again increasing, I come to an end by life-begotten birth, and coming into existence, and having been released unto death, I

<sup>1</sup> Lafaye, *L'Initiation Mithriaque*, p. 106.

pursue my way, as thou hast ordered from the beginning, as thou hast ordained. And having accomplished the mystery, I am *Pheroura miouri*."

Here the fragment abruptly breaks off, and plunges into directions for the manufacture of oracles and the other stuff common in Magic Papyri. One is not much inclined to believe with M. Cumont that the author of the galimatias knew nothing about Mithraism<sup>1</sup>, and merely introduced Mithras' name into his opening to impress his readers with a sense of the value of his recipes. It seems more likely that the writer of the fragment had really got hold of some part of a Mithraic ritual, which he had read without understanding it, and that he was trying to work more or less meaningless extracts from it into his spells on the same principle that the sorcerers of the European Renaissance used when they took similar liberties with the words of the Mass. If this view be adopted, it follows that the concluding words given above confirm the view that the Mithraists, like the Orphics before them, taught the metempsychosis or reincarnation of souls<sup>2</sup>. Did the Mithraist think that his soul, when released from this "dread necessity," finally escaped from even the planetary spheres and, raising itself into the heaven of the fixed stars, became united with the Deity Himself? We can only ask the question without being able to suggest an answer supported by any evidence.

With regard to the priests who acted as celebrants in these strange mysteries, there are instances to be found in the inscriptions which make it plain that the priestly office was not confined or attached to any particular degree of initiation. *Pater Patrum* (Father of Fathers) is a designation which occurs too frequently on the monuments for it to mean anything but eldest or president of those who had taken the seventh or highest degree in one congregation<sup>3</sup>. But *Sacerdos* or *Antistes*

<sup>1</sup> Cumont, *T. et M.* II. p. 56.

<sup>2</sup> Porphyry, *de Abstinencia*, Bk IV. c. 16 says this was so.

<sup>3</sup> Cumont, *T. et M.* I. p. 318, n. 1, points out that an initiate might become *Pater Patrum* immediately after being made *Pater* or *Pater sacrorum* simply. This appears from the two monuments both dated the same year of Vettius Agorius Praetextatus, *op. cit.* II. p. 95.

indifferently is the name by which the priest of Mithras is described by himself and others, and the holding of the office seems not to have been inconsistent with the tenure at once of other priesthoods and of high office in the State. Thus the *clarissimus* Vettius Agorius Praetextatus, who was Urban Praetor, Proconsul of Achaëa, Prefect of the City, Prefect of the Praetorians of Italy and Illyricum, and Consul Designate at the time of his death, was Father of Fathers in the religion of Mithras besides being Pontiff of the Sun and Pontiff of Vesta<sup>1</sup>. This was at a very late date, when probably only a man of high civil rank dared avow on his tombstone, as did Vettius, his fidelity to the god; but earlier, we find Lucius Septimius, a freedman of Severus, Caracalla, and Geta, acting as "Father and Priest of the Unconquered Mithras in the Augustan house"—evidently a Court chaplain—, and a certain *clarissimus* Alfenius Julianus Kamenius who is of consular rank, a quaestor and a praetor, as a "father of the sacred things of the Highest Unconquered One Mithras<sup>2</sup>." So, too, we find a veteran of the IVth Flavian Legion acting as *pater sacrorum*, a decurion as *antistes* and another as *sacerdos* of Mithras<sup>3</sup>. Evidently, the cares of the priesthood did not occupy the priest's whole time, and he never seems to have lived in the temple as did the clergy of the Alexandrian divinities. There was, on the faith of Porphyry, a *summus pontifex* or Supreme Pontiff of Mithras, who like the Christian bishop in the Epistle to Timothy was forbidden to marry more than once<sup>4</sup>; but this was probably a high officer of State appointed directly by the Emperor. No proof is forthcoming that a fire was kept perpetually burning on the altar in the European chapels of Mithras, as perhaps was the case with the temples of the faith in Asia Minor, or that daily or any other regularly repeated services were held there,

<sup>1</sup> See Ammianus Marcellinus Bk xxii. c. 7, for his life under Julian. His career is well described by Dill, *Roman Society in the Last Century of the Western Empire*, 1899, pp. 17, 18, 30, 154, 155.

<sup>2</sup> Cumont, *T. et M.* II. p. 100, inscr. 35; p. 98, inscr. 24.

<sup>3</sup> *Op. cit.* II. p. 130, inscr. 225; p. 132, inscr. 239; p. 134, inscr. 257. The two decurions may of course have been decurions of the rite only, as to which see *op. cit.* I. p. 326.

<sup>4</sup> *Op. cit.* I. p. 324; Tertullian, *Praescpt.* c. 40.

and such services moreover could seldom have been attended by the soldiers with the colours, who seem to have made up the majority of the god's worshippers. Prayers to the Sun-God and other deities were no doubt offered by Mithraists, possibly at sunrise and sunset, and perhaps special ones on the first day of the week, which they very likely held sacred to their god. But the small size of the Mithraea, and the scanty number of the members of the associations supporting each<sup>1</sup>, make it extremely unlikely that there was anything like regular congregational worship, or that the faithful assembled there except for initiations or meetings for conferring the different degrees. The extremely poor execution of the bas-reliefs and other sculptures found in the majority of these chapels all points the same way. Most of these, together with the furniture and what are nowadays called "articles de culte," were presented to the chapel by private members of the association<sup>2</sup>. The fact that the congregations of many chapels must have frequently changed by the shifting of garrisons from one end of the Empire to the other caused by the operations of war both external and civil, also helps to account for their temporary and poverty-stricken appearance when compared with the great and stately temples reared to rival gods like Serapis.

Thus the truth of Renan's comparison of the Mithraic faith with modern Freemasonry becomes more apparent, and we may picture to ourselves the Mithraists as a vast society spread over the whole of the Empire, consisting mainly of soldiers, and entirely confined to the male sex. The example of the Emperor Julian, himself a devotee of Mithras, but actively concerned in the propagation of the worship of other divinities, such as Apollo, Serapis, Mars, and Cybele<sup>3</sup>, shows that its real aim was not so much the conversion of individuals as the inclusion of all other cults within itself. It was doubtless with this view that Julian recalled from exile those heresiarchs who had been banished by the Christian emperors and insisted on equal

<sup>1</sup> Cumont, *T. et M.* I. p. 65. Thirty-five seems to be the greatest number belonging to any one chapel.

<sup>2</sup> *Op. cit.* I. p. 327.

<sup>3</sup> *Amm. Marcell. passim.*

toleration for all sects of Jews and Christians<sup>1</sup>. Themistius is no doubt merely echoing the sentiments of the Mithraist emperor when he writes to his Christian successor Jovian that no lover of wisdom should bind himself to any exclusively national worship, but should acquaint himself with all religions<sup>2</sup>. God, he says, requires no agreement on this subject among men, and their rivalries in matters of faith are really beneficial in leading their minds to the contemplation of other than worldly things. But this highly philosophic temper was not reached all at once; and it is probable that the worship of Mithras was, on its first importation into the West, but one foreign superstition the more, as little enlightened and as exclusively national as the Jewish, the Egyptian, or any of the others. It was probably its rise to imperial favour under the Antonines, when Commodus and many of the freedmen of Caesar's House were initiated, that first suggested to its votaries the possibility of using it as an instrument of government; and henceforth its fortunes were bound up with those of the still Pagan State. Its strictly monarchical doctrine, using the adjective in its ancient rather than in its modern connotation, must have always endeared it to the emperors, who were beginning to see clearly that in a *quasi*-Oriental despotism lay the only chance of salvation for the Roman Empire. Its relations with Mazdeism in the strict form which this last assumed after the religious reforms of the Sassanian Shahs have never been elucidated, and M. Cumont seems to rely too much upon the later Avestic literature to explain everything that is obscure in the religion of Mithras. If we imagine, as there is reason to do, that Western Mithraism was looked upon by the Sassanian reformers as a dangerous heresy<sup>3</sup>, the Roman Emperors would have an additional reason for supporting it; and it is significant that it was exactly those rulers whose wars against the Persians were most successful who seem to have most favoured the

<sup>1</sup> Neander, *Ch. Hist.* III. p. 136.

<sup>2</sup> *Marinus, vita Procli*, pp. 67, 68; Neander, *op. cit.* III. p. 136.

<sup>3</sup> Witness the reduction of Mitra, who plays such an important part in the religion of the Vedas, to the far lower position of chief of the Izeds or Yazatas in the Sassanian reform.

worship of the Persian god. When Trajan conquered Dacia, the great province between the Carpathians and the Danube now represented by Hungary and Roumania, he colonized it by a great mass of settlers from every part of the Roman Empire, including therein many Orientals who brought with them into their new home the worship of their Syrian and Asianic gods<sup>1</sup>. It was hence an excellent field for the culture of a universal and syncretic religion such as that of Mithras, and the great number of Mithraea whose remains have been found in that province, show that this religion must have received hearty encouragement from the Imperial Court. From its geographical position, Dacia formed an effective counterpoise to the growing influence upon Roman policy of the Eastern provinces, and it might have proved a valuable outpost for a religion which was always looked upon with hostility by the Greek-speaking subjects of Rome. Unfortunately, however, a religion which allies itself with the State must suffer from its ally's reverses as well as profit by its good fortunes, and so the Mithraists found. When the Gothic invasion desolated Dacia, and especially when Valerian's disaster enabled the Goths to gain a footing there which not even the military genius of Claudius could loosen, Mithraism received a blow which was ultimately to prove fatal. The abandonment of Dacia to the Goths and Vandals by Aurelian in 255 A.D., led to its replanting by a race whose faces were turned more to Constantinople than to Rome, and who were before long to be converted to Christianity *en masse*<sup>2</sup>. Diocletian and his colleagues did what they could to restore the balance by proclaiming, as has been said above, the "unconquered" Mithras the protector of their empire at the great city which is now the capital of the Austrian Empire; but the accession of Constantine and his alliance with the Christian Church some twenty years later, definitely turned the scale against the last god of Paganism. Although the Mithraic worship may have revived for a moment under the philosophic Julian, who was, as has been said, peculiarly addicted to it, it possessed no real power of recuperation, and was perhaps

<sup>1</sup> Cumont, *T. et M.* I. p. 250, for authorities.

<sup>2</sup> Gibbon, *Decline and Fall* (Bury's ed.), I. p. 260 n. 106.

one of the first Pagan religions to be extinguished by the triumphant Christians<sup>1</sup>. In 377 A.D., Gracchus, the Urban Prefect of Rome, being desirous of baptism, carried into effect a promise made, as St Jerome boasts, some time before, and breaking into a chapel of Mithras, "overturned, broke in pieces and cast out" the sculptures which had seen the admission of so many initiates<sup>2</sup>. His example was followed in other parts of the Empire, and it is probable that some decree was obtained from the Emperor Gratian legalizing these acts of vandalism<sup>3</sup>. It is in this reign, M. Cumont finds, that most of the Mithraea were wrecked, and the very few which have come down to us in more complete state owe their preservation to the caution of their congregations, who blocked or built up the entrances to them in the vain hope that a fresh turn of the wheel might again bring their own cult to the top<sup>4</sup>. A conservative reaction towards the older faiths did indeed come for a moment under Eugenius; but it was then too late. The masses had turned from Mithraism to Christianity, and the only adherents of the "Capped One" were to be found among the senators and high officials who had long connived at the evasion of the edicts prohibiting all forms of Pagan worship. The invasions of Alaric and Attila probably completed what the Christian mob had begun.

M. Cumont and Sir Samuel Dill are doubtless right when they attribute the downfall of Mithraism in great measure to its attitude towards women<sup>5</sup>. Mithraism was from the first essentially a virile faith, and had little need of the softer emotions. Hence we find in it none of the gorgeous public ritual, the long hours spent in mystic contemplation before the altar, or the filial devotion of the flock to the priest, that we see in the worship of the Alexandrian Gods. In spite of the great authority of M. Cumont, whose statements on the subject seem to have been accepted without much enquiry by later

<sup>1</sup> Reville, *Religion sous les Sévères*, p. 102.

<sup>2</sup> Cumont, *T. et M.* I. p. 347.

<sup>3</sup> Dill, *Last Century*, etc. p. 29, n. 2.

<sup>4</sup> Cumont, *T. et M.* I. p. 347.

<sup>5</sup> *Op. cit.* I. pp. 329, 330; Dill, *Nero to Marcus Aurelius*, p. 624.



writers, it will probably appear to the impartial student that the priests of Mithras were more like the churchwardens or elders of Protestant communities at the present day than the active and highly organized hierarchy of the Alexandrian divinities and of the Catholic Church. It is, as we have seen, most probable that they never visited their chapels except in company with the other devotees when an initiation into one or other of the seven degrees of the cult was to be performed, and, judging from the scanty numbers of the congregation, this can only have been at fairly long intervals. Hence the daily prayers and sacrifices of themselves and their congregations were probably rendered elsewhere, either in the privacy of their homes, or in the temples of other gods. In neither case would they have much need for the assistance of women in their propaganda, who would, moreover, have probably felt little interest in a worship from the most solemn and distinctive parts of which they were excluded. The Mithraists therefore had to dispense with the support of a very large and important fraction of the community which was easily won over to the side of their rivals. Exceptional causes such as the perpetual shifting of the legions from one end of the Empire to the other at a time when communications between them were many times more difficult than now, may have prevented such considerations for some time from having their full weight. When once they did so, the issue could not long be in doubt.

Nor was the very real, if somewhat vague, monotheism which Mithraism taught, very likely to attract, at first sight, the enthusiasm of a large and mixed population engaged in civil pursuits. If the conjecture made above be correct, the Mithraist in the ordinary way acknowledged no other god than Mithras, although he would probably have admitted that he was but the representative and antitype of the supreme Jupiter whom he recognized as the official head of the State pantheon. As for the other gods, he probably considered them as mere abstract personifications of the powers of Nature, who were at the most the creatures and subjects of Mithras "the friend," and whom it might please him to propitiate by acts of worship which the god would know how to appreciate. This is not very far from the

theories of the Stoics, always dear to the nobler spirits in the Roman Empire, and coupled with the high Stoic ideal of duty, forms one of the best working philosophies for the soldier ever devised. But the soldier, removed as he is from care for his daily necessities, and with instant and ready obedience to another will than his own constantly required of him, has always held different views on such subjects to the civilian; and such ideas were rather above the heads of the crowd, sunk for the most part in abject poverty, utterly absorbed in the struggle for daily bread, and only anxious to snatch some passing enjoyment from a life of toil. What they, and even more urgently, their womenfolk needed was a God, not towering above them like the Eternal Sun, the eye of Mithras and his earthly representative, shedding his radiance impartially upon the just and the unjust; but a God who had walked upon the earth in human form, who had known like themselves pain and affliction, and to whom they could therefore look for sympathy and help. Such a god was not to be found in the Mithraic Cave.

For these reasons, probably, Mithraism fell after a reign of little more than two centuries. Yet for good or ill, few religions have lived in vain; and some of the ideas which it made popular in Europe have hardly yet died out. The theory that the emperor, king, or chief of the State is of a different nature to other men, and is in a peculiar manner the care of the gods, was first formulated in the West during the time that Mithraism was in power and is a great deal more the creation of the Persian religion than of the Egyptian, in which he was said to be the incarnation of the Sun-God. This is fairly plain from the custom to which M. Cumont has lately drawn attention of releasing at the funeral or apotheosis of a Roman emperor a captive eagle, representing the soul of the dead ruler, the upward flight of the bird being held typical of the soul's ascension into heaven<sup>1</sup>. The connection of this practice with Mithraism is evident, since "eagle" was one of the names given to the perfect Mithraist, or he who had taken all the seven degrees of initiation, and had

<sup>1</sup> Cumont, "L'aigle funéraire des Syriens et l'apothéose des empereurs." *R.H.R.*, 1910, pt II. pp. 159 *seq.*

therefore earned the right to be called *pater sacrorum*<sup>1</sup>. The Christian emperors of Rome continued probably the practice and certainly the nomenclature associated with it, and Constantine and his successors were hailed by the Mithraic epithets of "aeternus," "invictus," and "felix" as freely as his Pagan predecessors. From this period the notion of the "divinity that doth hedge a king" descended to comparatively modern times, and "Sacred Majesty" was an epithet of our own kings down to the reign of the last Stuart. Probably, too, it was the custom of releasing an eagle at a royal funeral which so impressed the popular imagination that the metaphor became transferred, as such things generally are sooner or later, to the lower ranks of the community, and the figure of the soul being borne aloft on wings took the place that it still occupies in popular Christian literature.

The share that Mithraism had in diffusing the practices of magic and astrology is by no means so clear. That the Mithraists, like other pagans of the early centuries, were addicted to magic is one of the most frequent accusations brought against them by Christian writers, and the word magic itself, as has been said above, is derived from those Magi from whom the Mithraists were said to have derived their doctrine. In support of this, it can certainly be said that the worshippers of Mithras by rendering a modified cult to Ahriman, whom the Christians identified with Satan, laid themselves open to the suspicion of trafficking with devils, and it is quite possible that they, like the followers of many other religions at the time, looked with favour upon the compulsion rather than the propitiation of the lower powers. Yet the strict monotheism of the faith which practically looked to Mithras for the ultimate control and regulation of all sublunary things, is certainly against this conclusion; and it should be noticed that the laws against the practices of magic and astrology, then so intertwined that it is difficult to separate them<sup>2</sup>, were quite as severe under emperors like Commodus and Diocletian who worshipped Mithras, as

<sup>1</sup> Cf. the "solitary eagle" of the Magic Papyrus quoted on p. 265 *supra*.

<sup>2</sup> Maury, *La Magie et L'Astrologie*, *passim*. The Zend Avesta also denounces magic as did the later Manichaeism. See p. 342 *infra*.

under those of their successors who professed the faith of Christ. The rites of Hecate, however, were, as we have seen, closely connected with those of Mithras and were generally in the hands of Mithraists. These Hecatean rites seem to have been almost entirely magical in their character, and it is the name of Hecate that was handed down as that of the patroness of sorcerers through the Middle Ages and the Renaissance<sup>1</sup>. One of the priests of Mithras also goes out of his way to declare on his epitaph that he is *studiosus astrologiae*, and on the whole the Christian accusation was probably not without foundation.

<sup>1</sup> As in Shakespeare's *Macbeth*.

## CHAPTER XIII

### MANES AND THE MANICHAEANS

It is generally said that the religion of Mithras ended and was absorbed in Manichaeism, which may thus be supposed to have inherited some, at least, of its doctrines<sup>1</sup>. This is one of those statements which are copied by one author from another until they acquire by mere repetition the force of an axiom; but its truth is not obvious, nor does it appear to rest upon any sound foundation. Except in the fact that both Mithraism and Manichaeism came in the first instance from Persia, there is little likeness between the two faiths, which are in all essential respects diametrically opposed to each other. A strict dualism, or the eternal antagonism of two equal principles, is the distinguishing feature of the religion of Manes, while the worship of Mithras rested, as has been said in the last chapter, on an equally uncompromising monotheism, which made the Supreme Being, whether known as Jupiter or Ormuzd, at once the creator and the governor of the universe. In this respect, it drew near to Judaism, which it may have aimed at incorporating with itself, and was not ashamed to place on its monuments scenes which can be referred to the Old Testament<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> So Cumont, *T. et M.* I. pp. 45, 349, 350. He seems to rely, however, entirely on the passage in the *Acta Archelai* (as to which see n. 1, p. 280 *infra*), wherein the supposed bishop Archelaus addresses the equally imaginary Manes as "Savage priest and accomplice of Mithras!"—possibly a mere term of abuse. See Hegemonius, *Acta Archelai*, ed. Beeson, Leipzig, 1906, c. XL. p. 59.

<sup>2</sup> Cumont, *T. et M.* I. p. 41. He sees in the scenes which border the Tauroctony references or parallels to the fig-leaves of Genesis, the striking of the rock by Moses, and the ascension of Elijah. In the so-called Mithraic Ritual of the Magic Papyrus of Paris, there are certain Hebrew words introduced, such as *πινι* (a well-known perversion of the Tetragrammaton), *σανχερωβ* and *σεμεσ λαμ* (The "Eternal Sun").

Manichaeism, on the other hand, looked on Judaism with horror, rejected the Old Testament entirely, and was not improbably born in an outbreak of anti-Semitic fury<sup>1</sup>. But the discrepancy of doctrine is as nothing compared to the wide difference in those external matters which in a new religion most strike the imagination of the crowd, and have therefore much to do with its success or failure. The Mithraist was accustomed, as we have seen, to an allegorical and symbolical ritual in which the material image of his god was for ever before him; but the Manichaeon, as we shall see later, forbade the use of images and his worship consisted merely of prayers and hymns. The Mithraists made frequent use in their ceremonies of the sacrifice of animals; but the Manichaeans looked with displeasure on the taking of the life even of plants. The worshipper of Mithras not only gloried in the outward profession of his religion, but by his avoidance of the wearing of garlands forced the notice of it on those of his fellows who were not of the faith. The follower of Manes, on the contrary, concealed his religion as carefully as Basilides wished his followers to conceal theirs, and even went to the length of outwardly adopting a creed different from his own. It is not therefore to be wondered at that the rulers of the Roman Empire, whose acquaintance with the worship of Mithras was a thousand times more profound than our own, should have favoured Mithraism and have made every effort to suppress Manichaeism. The very emperors who placed their reformed State under the protection of Mithras imposed the penalty of death upon those of their subjects who should venture to teach the religion of Manes<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> See the story which Josephus, *Antiq.* xx. c. 2, 3, 4, tells about Izates, king of Adiabene, who wanted to turn Jew and thereby so offended his people that they called in against him Vologeses or Valkash, the first reforming Zoroastrian king and collector of the books of the Zend Avesta. Cf. Darmesteter, *The Zend Avesta* (Sacred Books of the East), Oxford, 1895, p. xl. Cf. Ém. de Stoop *La Diffusion du Manichéisme dans l'Empire romain*, Gand, 1909, p. 10.

<sup>2</sup> Circa 296, A.D. See Neander, *Ch. Hist.* ii. p. 195, where the authenticity of the decree is defended. For the provocation given to the Empire by the anti-militarism of Manes see de Stoop, *op. cit.* pp. 36-37.

Not less different were the sanctions with which Mithraism and Manichaeism appeared in the West. The worship of Mithras came into the Roman world unobtrusively and without any claim to an exclusive revelation or special means of propaganda. But Manichaeism had at its back the personality of one of those wonderful men who appear at rare intervals in the world's history, to leave behind them a memorial of their empire over the minds of their fellows in the shape of a new creed. Manes was indeed, as the discoveries of the last decade have taught us, an innovator in religion entirely worthy to rank with Zoroaster, Buddha, and Muhammad, and when the difficulties in the way of his missionary activity are considered, his influence upon the religious ideas of those who came after him was at least as marked as that of any of them. Manes or Mânî—the first being the Greek form of the name—was born, according to his own deliberate statement, about the year 216 A.D., in a village of Babylonia called Mardînû situate on the Kutha canal to the south of Ctesiphon<sup>1</sup>. According to Christian tradition, his real name was Corbicius or Kubrik and he was a slave of unknown birth<sup>2</sup>; according to the Mahomedan writers his father was one Patecius or Fatak, while his mother is sometimes described as the "Lady Mary," sometimes as a Parthian princess, and is sometimes named Karossa<sup>3</sup>. Such legends grow up naturally round the birth of all founders of religions, and we should believe them the less in this case that they have been handed down to us by the professors of religions bitterly opposed to that of Manes. Yet the story about the Parthian princess seems confirmed by the free access that he seems to have always possessed to the court of the Persian monarchs of his time. Manes himself says, according

<sup>1</sup> Al-Bîrûnî, *Chronology of Ancient Nations*, p. 190. The date he gives is twelve years before the accession of Ardeshr. E. Rochat, *Essai sur Mani et sa Doctrine*, Genève, 1897, p. 81, examines all the different accounts and makes the date from 214 to 218 A.D.

<sup>2</sup> Epiphanius, *Haer.* LXVI. c. 1, p. 399, Oehler; Socrates, *Hist. Eccl.* Bk I. c. 22; Hegemonius, *Acta Archelai*, c. LXIV.

<sup>3</sup> Muhammed ben Ishak, commonly called En-Nadîm, in the book known as the *Fihrist*, translated by Flügel, *Mani, seine Lehre und seine Schriften*, Leipzig, 1862, pp. 83, 116, 118, 119. Cf. Rochat, *op. cit.* p. 75.

to Al-Bîrûnî, that illumination came to him in his thirteenth year<sup>1</sup>; but this is contradicted by the *Fihrist*, which puts the age at which he received revelation as twenty-four<sup>2</sup>. The *Acta Archelai*, a Christian source obviously suspect in the state it has come down to us, would make him a priest of Mithras<sup>3</sup>, a tradition which may have originated at a date when the Catholic Church recognized the danger to itself involved in the spread of the Mithraic religion. Another story would make him a Magus or one of the priestly caste entrusted by Ardeshr with the propagation of the reformed religion of Zoroaster<sup>4</sup>, which is discredited by the fact that it was the Magi who were from the outset his bitterest enemies<sup>5</sup>. A late Oriental writer says that he was a Christian priest having a cure of souls at Ahvâz<sup>6</sup>, the capital city of the province of Huzitis, which again is negatived by the fact that he seems from his writings to have had little more than a hearsay knowledge of Catholic Christianity, although they show some acquaintance with the heresies of Bardesanes and Marcion<sup>7</sup>. He is said to have acquired great

<sup>1</sup> Al-Bîrûnî, *Chronology*, p. 190.

<sup>2</sup> Flügel, *op. cit.* p. 84; Rochat, *op. cit.* p. 83.

<sup>3</sup> Hegemonius, *Acta Arch.* c. XL., p. 59, Beeson. Rochat, *op. cit.* pp. 9-49, discusses the authenticity of the *Acta* chapter by chapter. He thinks the pretended discussion between Archelaus and Manes unhistorical, and the account of it possibly modelled on that between St Augustine and Faustus the Manichaean. The remainder of the *Acta* he considers fairly trustworthy as an account of Manes' own tenets. This may well be, as Epiphanius, *Haer.* LXVI. cc. 6-7, 25-31, transcribes the epistle to Marcellus, its answer, and the exposition of Turbo, and could scarcely have heard, as early as 375 A.D., about which time he wrote, of St Augustine's discussion. The *Acta* owe much to the care of the American scholar, Mr Beeson of Chicago, who has given us the careful edition of them mentioned in n. 1, p. 277 *supra*. It is a pity that he did not see his way to keep the old numeration of the chapters.

<sup>4</sup> Beausobre, *Hist. du Manichéisme*, Paris, 1734, Pt I. Bk II. cc. 1-4. Cf. Stokes in *Dict. Christian Biog. s.v. Manes*; Rochat, *op. cit.* p. 83.

<sup>5</sup> Rochat, *op. cit.* p. 89.

<sup>6</sup> Abulfarag in Kessler, *Forschungen über die Manichäische Religion*, Berlin, 1889, Bd I. p. 335; Rochat, *op. cit.* p. 84; Neander, *Ch. Hist.* II. p. 168.

<sup>7</sup> Flügel, *op. cit.* p. 85. Cf. Al-Bîrûnî, *India* (ed. Sachau), p. 55, where Manes quotes the opinion of Bardesanes' "partizans." There are many words put into the mouth of Manes in the work quoted which argue acquaintance with the *Pistis Sophia*.



skill in painting which he used to illustrate his teaching<sup>1</sup>, and to have been a learned mathematician and astronomer. This is likely enough; but the only events of his life which seem well attested, are that he began at an early age to propagate his doctrine and that he succeeded in converting to it Peroz or Fîrûz the son of Ardeshr, through whose means he obtained a formal hearing from Sapor or Shâpûr, the conqueror of Valerian and Ardeshr's successor, shortly after this king's accession to the throne<sup>2</sup>. Sapor seems to have listened to Manes with respect and, according to an Oriental writer, to have even favoured his propaganda, until the Magi, to whom the revival of the Zoroastrian religion had been committed, convinced him of his error<sup>3</sup>. On this, Manes was exiled from Persia and retired, says Al-Bîrûnî, to India, China, and Thibet preaching his gospel<sup>4</sup>. On Sapor's death, he returned to Persia under Hormisdas or Ormuz, and again, it is said, succeeded in converting to his tenets the reigning monarch<sup>5</sup>. On Varanes' or Bahram's accession to the throne the following year, however, he was seized and put to death as a heretic after a disputation with the Chief of the Magi, in which he failed to support the test of an ordeal by molten metal proposed to him<sup>6</sup>. The most likely account of his death narrates that he was decapitated, and that his skin stuffed with straw was suspended at the gate of the town where the execution took place<sup>7</sup>. This was followed

<sup>1</sup> Abulmaali in Kessler, *op. cit.* p. 371; Firdâûsi, *ibid.* p. 375; Mirkhând, *ibid.* p. 379. Cf. Rochat, *op. cit.* p. 81. He is said to have painted his pictures in a cave in Turkestan (Stokes in *Dict. Christian Biog. s.v. Manes*), which would agree well enough with the late German discoveries at Turfan, for which see A. von Le Coq in *J.R.A.S.* 1909, pp. 299 *sqq.*

<sup>2</sup> Flügel, *op. cit.* p. 85.

<sup>3</sup> Al-Jakûbi in Kessler, *op. cit.* pp. 328, 329; cf. Rochat, *op. cit.* p. 88.

<sup>4</sup> Al-Bîrûnî, *Chronology*, pp. 191, 192.

<sup>5</sup> Rochat, *op. cit.* p. 89. Al-Bîrûnî, whom he quotes, however, says merely that the Manichaeans increased under Ormuz, and also that Ormuz "killed a number of them." See last note.

<sup>6</sup> Al-Jakûbi in Kessler, *op. cit.* p. 330. But Darmesteter (see passage quoted in n. 2, p. 284 *infra*) puts this event as happening after Ormuz' death and under Shapur II.

<sup>7</sup> Al-Bîrûnî, *Chronology*, p. 191. The town is called Djundi-sâbur or Gundisabur.

by a great persecution of the Manichaeans throughout Persia, and it is fairly evident that this, like his own fate, was due to the hostility he had aroused in the Magi<sup>1</sup>. The date of his death is fixed with some accuracy at 275 A.D., so that he would then have reached the age of sixty years<sup>2</sup>.

The causes underlying this sudden appearance of a new religion are doubtless to be looked for in the political and religious history of Persia at the time. Ardeshr, as has been said above, gave new life to the feeling of Persian nationality which the Parthian Kings had kept alive during Greek supremacy in Asia, and succeeded in again founding a Persian Empire. Like Alexander, Antiochus Epiphanes, and again, Diocletian, he seems to have been thoroughly alive to the great effect that a faith common to the whole empire would have in uniting the peoples under his sway.

"Never forget," he says in the supposed testament that he is said to have left for the guidance of his son Sapor, "that as a king you are at once the protector of religion and of your country. Consider the altar and the throne as inseparable and that they must always sustain each other. A sovereign without religion is a tyrant, and a people which have no religion may be deemed the most monstrous of all societies. Religion may exist without a State, but a State cannot exist without religion; and it is by holy laws that a political association can alone be bound<sup>3</sup>."

Yet in spite of these sentiments, more pithily expressed perhaps in the "No bishop, no king" of our own James I, the task of founding a common religion for the whole of the new Persian empire must have presented some uncommon difficulties. Apart from the strong Semitic element dominant in their Babylonian province, the Parthians had always been eclectic in matters of faith, and Vonones, one of the last kings of Parthia, had shown himself to be a Philhellene of a type which must have been peculiarly offensive to a sovereign who was

<sup>1</sup> Al-Jakûbi, *ubi cit. supra*; Eutychnus quoted by Stokes, *Dict. Christian Biog. s.v. Manes*.

<sup>2</sup> Rochat, *op. cit.* p. 93, examines all the evidence for this and comes to the conclusion given in the text.

<sup>3</sup> Malcolm, *History of Persia*, London, 1821, Vol. i. pp. 95, 96.

trying to revive the old Persian nationality<sup>1</sup>. The worship of Mithras, the god most favoured by the legions with whom Ardeshr was soon to be at death-grips, must have been equally out of the question; and the knowledge of this is probably to be seen in the low place in the celestial hierarchy assigned to the old Vedic god in the Avesta of Ardeshr's day<sup>2</sup>. The Jewish religion in Central Asia had lately given signs of proselytizing fervour, and it was the going-over of a Parthian kinglet against the will of his people to the Jewish faith which first, according to one account, gave the excuse for the intervention of Vologeses or Valkhash and the subsequent reformation or revival of the Zoroastrian religion<sup>3</sup>. At the same time, Christianity had already begun to share with Mithraism the devotion of the legions stationed on the Roman frontier, and in the Gnostic form favoured by the teaching of Marcion and Bardesanes was pushing into Persia from Armenia and Edessa<sup>4</sup>. Nor can we doubt that Buddhism, already perhaps struck with decay in its native country of India<sup>5</sup>, but flourishing exceedingly further East, was trying to obtain a foothold in that very Bactria which was afterwards said to have been the historic scene of Zoroaster's activity. Other small, but, as the event was to show, highly vitalized faiths, were current in Western Asia, and the power of the Magi when Ardeshr overthrew the Parthian power had declined so greatly that the statues of the Parthian kings were placed in the temples of the gods and adored equally with those of the divinities<sup>6</sup>. The Persians of Herodotus' time, who did not believe in deities who had the same nature as men, would have blushed at such a profanation.

<sup>1</sup> G. Rawlinson, *The 6th Oriental Monarchy*, 1873, p. 222; Rochat, *op. cit.* p. 53.

<sup>2</sup> See Chap. XII *supra*, p. 232.

<sup>3</sup> See n. 1, p. 278 *supra*.

<sup>4</sup> Al-Birûnî, *Chron.* p. 187, makes Manes the successor or continuator of Bardesanes and Marcion. This was certainly not so; but it was probably only from their followers that he derived any acquaintance with Christianity. See n. 7, p. 280 *supra*. So Muhammad or Mahommed, four centuries later, drew his ideas of the same faith from the heretics of his day.

<sup>5</sup> Rhys Davids, *Buddhist India*, 1903, p. 318, says that after 300 A.D. Buddhism was everywhere in decay in India.

<sup>6</sup> Rochat, *op. cit.* p. 58.

From this unpromising welter of creeds and cults, Ardeshr̄ delivered the State by restoring the worship of Ahura Mazda as the State religion. One of his first cares was to collect the fragments of the books which we now know as the Zend Avesta, in which the revelations of the national prophet Zoroaster were set down in a language not then understood of the people. It was afterwards said that the MSS. of these books had purposely been destroyed or scattered by Alexander; but the fact seems to be that they had fallen into discredit through the turning-away of the Persians towards Hellenic and Semitic gods; and that a previous attempt to restore their authority by Valkhash or Vologeses I, the Parthian king who reigned from 50 to 75 A.D., had met with little encouragement from his subjects<sup>1</sup>. Most modern scholars are now agreed that the Avesta and the literature that grew up round it contain many doctrines not to be found in the Persian religion current in Achaemenian times, and evidently brought into it from foreign sources under the Hellenistic and Parthian kings. Such as it is, however, the Avesta formed the Sacred Book of Ardeshr̄'s reformation; while, in the order of the Magi, by him restored to more than their former power, the reformed Zoroastrian faith possessed an active, established, and persecuting Church, which reigned in Persia without a serious rival until the Mahomedan invasion.

Yet the first struggles of the reformation must have been sharp, and Darmesteter was doubtless justified when he saw in Manichaeism the first and possibly the strongest expression of the revulsion of Ardeshr̄'s subjects against the rigid orthodoxy which he sought to impose upon them<sup>2</sup>. That such a feeling persisted for some time is plain from the fact that Manes' "heresy" is said by Al-Bīrūnī to have been followed by that of Mazdak, who seems to have preached, like the Antinomian sects of Cromwell's time, a kind of Socialism including the community of women and of property<sup>3</sup>. There arose also about the same time or a little later the sect of Zervanists

<sup>1</sup> Darmesteter, *Zend Avesta*, pp. xl, xli.

<sup>2</sup> *Op. cit.* pp. xlvii sqq.

<sup>3</sup> Al-Bīrūnī, *Chron.* p. 192.

referred to in the chapter on Mithras, who taught that Boundless Time was the origin of all things and was superior to Ormuzd and Ahriman, to both of whom he was said to have given birth. They seemed to have gained great power in the reign of Yezdegerd II; and, if we may trust the Armenian authors, a proclamation commanding adherence to their doctrines was put forth by Yezdegerd's general Mihr Nerses on his invasion of Armenia in 450 A.D.<sup>1</sup> But the earliest and most enduring of these heresies or rebellions against the purified and restored religion of Ahura Mazda appears to have been that of Manes.

Were now the doctrines that Manes preached to his own undoing his invention, or did he draw them from some pre-existent source? It is said, in a Christian account which has come down to us, that they were the work of one Scythianus<sup>2</sup>, a native, as his name implies, of "Scythia" (which here probably means Turkestan) and a contemporary of the Apostles, who married an Egyptian slave and learned from her all the wisdom of the Egyptians<sup>3</sup>. With the help of this and the tincture of dualism which he extracted from "the works of Pythagoras," the story goes on to say, Scythianus constructed a system which he taught to a disciple named Terebinthus, otherwise called Buddas or Buddha, before his own death in Judaea<sup>4</sup>. This

<sup>1</sup> Elisaeus Vartabed in Langlois' *Collection des Hist. de l'Arménie*, Paris, 1868, t. II. p. 190. The story is repeated almost word for word by Eznig of Gogh, *ibid.* p. 875. Cf. Neander, *Ch. Hist.* II. p. 171.

<sup>2</sup> Rochat, *op. cit.*, following Kessler, shows, it seems, conclusively, that this is another name for Manes' father, Fatak or Patecius.

<sup>3</sup> She was a courtesan at Hypselis in the Thebaid according to Epiphanius, *Haer.* LXVI. c. 11, p. 400, Oehler. As Baur, *Die Manichäische Religions-system*, Tübingen, 1831, p. 468 *sqq.* has pointed out, this is probably an imitation of the story told about Simon Magus and his Helena (see Chap. VI *supra*). It seems to have arisen as an embroidery, quite in Epiphanius' manner, upon the story in the *Acta*, that Scythianus married a captive from the Upper Thebaid (Hegemonius, *op. cit.* c. LXII. p. 90, Beeson).

<sup>4</sup> Many guesses have been made as to the allusions concealed under these names, as to which see Rochat, *op. cit.* pp. 64-73. Neander (*Ch. Hist.* II. p. 16) quotes from Ritter the suggestion that Terebinthus may come from an epithet of Buddha, *Tere-hintu* "Lord of the Hindus." One wonders whether it might not have been as fitly given to a Jewish slave

Terebinthus gave out that he was born of a virgin and had been nursed by an angel on a mountain; and he also wrote four books in which the doctrines of Scythianus were set down<sup>1</sup>. These books he entrusted to an aged widow with whom he lived, and he was afterwards struck dead while performing a magical ceremony. On his death, she bought a boy of seven years old named Corbicius, whom she enfranchised, and to whom she left her property and Terebinthus' books some five years later. Thus equipped, Corbicius took the name of Manes, which may signify "Cup" or "Vessel<sup>2</sup>," and began to preach. This history has evidently been much corrupted and by no means agrees with the account before quoted from Oriental sources which bears greater marks of authenticity; but it is thought by some to be, like the 14th chapter of Genesis, a sort of allegory in which the names of peoples and systems are given as those of individual men<sup>3</sup>. If this be so, we should perhaps see in Scythianus the representative of those non-Aryan tribes of Medes of whom the Magi formed part, while in the name of Buddha we might find that of one of those Judæan communities holding a mixture of Magian and Buddhist tenets who according to one tradition were for long encamped near the Dead Sea<sup>4</sup>. Yet there is nothing specifically Buddhist or Egyptian about the doctrines of Manes as we know them<sup>5</sup>, and if there were any likeness between the sold at the Fair of the Terebinth with which Hadrian closed his war of extermination.

<sup>1</sup> These four books may have been intended for the *Shapurakhan*, the *Treasure*, the *Gospel* and the *Capitularies*, which Al-Bîrûnî, *Chron.* p. 171, attributes to Mani. Cf. Epiphanius, *Haer.* LXVI. c. 2, p. 402, Oehler, and the *Scholia* of Théodore bar Khôni in Pognon, *Inscriptions Mandaites des Coupes de Khouabir*, pp. 182, 183.

<sup>2</sup> Epiphanius, *op. cit.* c. 1, p. 398, Oehler.

<sup>3</sup> Colditz in Kessler, *op. cit.* pp. 15, 16. Cf. Rochat, *op. cit.* pp. 65, 66.

<sup>4</sup> Morrison, *Jews under Romans*, p. 325 for authorities. Philo, *de Vit. Contempl.* etc. c. III. says that similar communities existed in his time near the Mareotic lake in Egypt. But the date of the treatise and its attribution to Philo are alike uncertain. The first mention of Buddha in Greek literature is said to be that by Clem. Alex. *Strom.* Bk I. c. 15.

<sup>5</sup> Harnack in *Encyc. Brianna*, 9th edition, s.v. Manichaeans, p. 48, says "There is not a single point in Manichaeism which demands for its

mythology and observances of the cult and those of its predecessors, it was probably introduced by Manes' followers rather than by himself<sup>1</sup>. As to the doctrines of the Magi, Manes certainly had no occasion to go to Judaea to find them; for in the Persia of Ardeshir and Sapor he must have heard quite as much of them as he wished.

Probably, therefore, the Christian account of Manes' sources is untrue, or rather, as M. Rochat suggests, it was composed at a time and place in which Manichaeism had become a heresy or alternative creed attached, so to speak, not to Zoroastrianism but to Christianity, and had picked up from this and other faiths many accretions<sup>2</sup>. The doctrine of Manes which has come down to us from other sources is extremely simple, and seems to accord better with the Puritanical simplicity of life and ritual afterwards practised by his followers. Both the Christian and the Mahommedan traditions agree that he believed that there were two gods, uncreated and eternal, and everlastingly opposed to each other<sup>3</sup>. One of these is the God of Light and the other the God of Darkness; but he does not seem to have given any specific or proper name to either<sup>4</sup>. It is possible that this last-named being may have been identified

explanation an appeal to Buddhism." This may be, but the discoveries at Turfan and Tun-huang have made a connection between the two more probable than appeared at the time he wrote. See also Kessler as quoted by Rochat, *op. cit.* pp. 192, 193.

<sup>1</sup> This appears from the Chinese Treatise at Peking mentioned *later*. See p. 293, n. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Rochat, *op. cit.* p. 194. So Socrates, *Eccl. Hist.* Bk. I. c. 22, calls Manichaeism "a sort of heathen (ἑλληνίζον) Christianity."

<sup>3</sup> Hegemonius, *Acta*, c. vii. p. 91, Beeson; Flügel, *op. cit.* p. 86.

<sup>4</sup> Certainly none is recorded in the Christian accounts, where Darkness is called Hyle or Matter. En Nadim (Flügel, *op. cit.* p. 86) makes Manes call the good God "the King of the Paradise of Light" and (p. 90) the Spirit of Darkness, Hummâma. Schahrastâni, as quoted in Flügel's note (p. 240), makes this word mean "mirk" or "smoke" (*Quaim*). It would be curious if Hummâma had any connection with the Elamite Khumbaba, the opponent of the Babylonian hero Gilgamesh, because this personage already figures in Ctesias' story about Nannaros, which has been recognized as a myth relating to the Moon-god.

by him with Matter<sup>1</sup>, although this would seem to be a remnant of the Platonic philosophy of which there is no other trace in his teaching. But it is certain that he regarded the God of Darkness as entirely evil, that is to say, malevolent, and as a power to propitiate whom man should make no attempt. "I have considered it needful to despatch this letter to you" says an epistle which there is much reason to consider expresses the opinions, if not the actual words, of Manes himself<sup>2</sup>:

"first for the salvation of your soul and then to secure you against dubious opinions, and especially against notions such as those teach who lead astray the more simple (ἀπλούστεροι), alleging that both good and evil come from the same Power, and introducing but one principle, and neither distinguishing nor separating the darkness from the light, and the good from the bad and the evil (φαῦλον), and that which is without man from that which is within him, as we have said formerly, so that they cease not to confuse and mingle one thing with another. But do not thou, O my son, like most men, unreasonably and foolishly join the two together nor ascribe them both to the God of Goodness. For these teachers attribute to God the beginning and the end, and make him the father of these ills *the end of which is near a curse*<sup>3</sup>."

Although this epistle bears evident marks of having been worked over and amplified by some writer of a later age than that of the founder of Manichaeism, there cannot be much doubt that it contains his teaching on the Two Principles of all things. In the Christian account of Manes' doctrine which

<sup>1</sup> τὸ τῆς ὕλης δημιουργημα Hegemonius, *Acta*, c. viii. p. 9, Beeson. Cf. Alexander of Lycopolis, *adv. Manichaeos*, c. ii.

<sup>2</sup> Epiph. *Haer.* lxxvi. c. 6, p. 408, Oehler; Hegemonius, *Acta*, c. v. pp. 5-7, Beeson. The authenticity of the letter is defended by Kessler, *op. cit.* p. 166. Cf. Rochat, *op. cit.* p. 94 *contra*.

<sup>3</sup> τῶν κακῶν ἐπὶ τὸν θεὸν ἀναφέρουσιν, ὃν τὸ τέλος κατάρas ἐγγύς. It is evidently intended for a quotation from Heb. vi. 8, which however puts it rather differently as ἐκφέρουσα δὲ ἀκάνθας καὶ τριβόλους ἀδόκιμος καὶ κατάρas ἐγγύς, ἥς τὸ τέλος εἰς καῦσιν. "But that which beareth thorns and briars is to be rejected and is nigh unto cursing; whose end is to be burned." The *Khuastuqnifti* or Manichaean confession mentioned later repeats this phrase about God not being the creator of evil as well as of good. See p. 335 *infra*.



M. Rochat thinks earlier than the epistle quoted above, Manes' *quondam* follower Turbo says after recantation that his master reverences two gods "unbegotten, self-existing (*αὐτοφύεις*), eternal and set over against each other," and that "he represents one as good, the other as wicked, giving to the one the name of Light and to the other that of Darkness<sup>1</sup>." So, too, the Mahommedan writers who give what seems to be an independent account of Manes' opinions are agreed that he deduced the origin of the world from "two Original Principles, one of which is Light and the other Darkness, and which are separated one from the other<sup>2</sup>." The absolute opposition from the outset of good and evil therefore formed the pivot of Manes' whole system, and was opposed quite as much to the Christian and Jewish creeds as to the Mithraic and other modifications of Persian religious ideas then or later in vogue, which held that evil like good was the creation of the Supreme Being, and that Ahriman or Pluto was a god having subordinate authority to, but of the same nature as, Ormuzd or Zeus. This uncompromisingly dualistic theory gives an origin to evil independent of that of good, and can only lead logically to the assertion of its eternity. Whether Manes gave utterance to it for the first time, or derived it from a theology then current in Persia, there is little evidence to show<sup>3</sup>. The Zend Avesta itself in its Sassanian recension does not seem to pronounce clearly on this point, and has been thought by some high authorities to teach

<sup>1</sup> Hegemonius, *Acta*, c. vii. p. 9, Beeson.

<sup>2</sup> En Nadīm in Kessler, *op. cit.* pp. 386, *sqq.* Kessler's translation of En Nadīm, which is given in the first Appendix to the work quoted, differs slightly from that of Flügel and depends on a somewhat better text than the last-named. It is therefore used when possible in the remaining notes to this chapter. Flügel's book, however, has the advantage of a commentary of some 300 pages marked with great erudition, and must still be consulted by anyone wishing to be acquainted with its subject.

<sup>3</sup> Plutarch, *de Is. et Os.* c. xlv., says, however, that "evil must have a principle of its own," so that it cannot be the work of a benevolent being. As he is generally supposed to have taken his account of the Persian teaching from Theopompos of Chios, who was at the Court of Ptolemy about 305 B.C., his evidence is against those who, like M. Cumont, would make the "Zervanist" opinion, which assumes a common principle for good and evil, pre-Christian. Yet the point does not yet seem capable of decision, as Plutarch *may* here be only giving us his own opinion.

the subordinate origin and ultimate extinction of evil<sup>1</sup>, and by others exactly the reverse. It does, however, seem to be clear that unless Manes invented *de novo* the doctrine above quoted, it must have been from Persia that he obtained it. No other country with which he can have become acquainted has yet been shown to possess it<sup>2</sup>.

Exclusively Oriental, too, in its origin must be the history of the conflict between these two Principles which follows. Each of them apparently dwelt in his own domain for countless ages untroubled by the existence of the other. The Light is the uppermost and is, according to the Mahommedan version of Manes' doctrine, without bounds in height and on each side. The Darkness lies below it, and is in like manner boundless in depth and in lateral extent<sup>3</sup>. Hence there is a long frontier at which they touch, and this spot was filled from the beginning by the celestial air and the celestial earth. If we may read into the tradition something which is not expressed there, but which seems to follow logically from it, this atmosphere and this earth were the heavier parts of the Divine substance, which sinking down formed a kind of sediment or deposit<sup>4</sup>. Each of these Two Principles has five "members" or components,

<sup>1</sup> Casartelli, *op. cit.* p. 44.

<sup>2</sup> This is really the *crux* of the whole question. If the idea could be traced back to the philosophers of Ionia (e.g. Heraclitus of Ephesus) and their theory of eternal strife and discord being the cause of all mundane phenomena, it is difficult to say whence the Ionians themselves derived it, save from Persia. We can, of course, suppose, if we please, that the Persians did not invent it *de novo*, but took it over from some of their subjects. Among these, the Babylonians, for instance, from the earliest times portrayed their demons as not only attempting to invade the heaven of the gods, but as being in perpetual warfare with one another. But the very little we know of Babylonian philosophy would lead us to think that it inclined towards pantheism of a materialistic kind rather than to dualism.

<sup>3</sup> En Nadim, in Kessler, *op. cit.* p. 387; Flügel, *op. cit.* p. 86.

<sup>4</sup> The likeness of this to the cosmogony of the Ophites and their successor Valentinus is of course marked (cf. Chaps. VIII and IX *supra*). Manes may have borrowed it directly from Valentinus' follower Bardesanes, whose doctrines were powerful in Edessa and Mesopotamia in his time, or he may have taken it at first-hand from Persian or Babylonian tradition. That Manes was acquainted with Bardesanes' doctrines, see n. 7, p. 280 *supra*.

and this partition into five seems in the Manichaean teaching to run through all things. Thus, the Mahommedan tradition tells us that the "members" of the God of Light are Gentleness, Knowledge, Intelligence, Discretion, and Discernment, those of the Air the same five, of the (celestial) earth, the Breeze or Ether, Wind, Light, Water, and Fire, and of the Darkness Smoke, Flame, Hot Wind, Poison or Pestilence, and Gloom or Fog<sup>1</sup>. In this, and especially in its deification of abstract principles, we may see a reflection of Gnostic teaching which may easily have reached Manes from Valentinus by way of Bardesanes and the Oriental or Edessan School. On the other hand, the borrowing may have been the other way, and Simon Magus may have obtained these notions from the Persian Magi and have handed them on to Valentinus and his successors. This does not seem so likely as the other, but the point can hardly be settled until we know more than we do at present of the state of the Persian religion from the time of the Achaemenian kings to the Sassanian reform.

However that may be, both the Christian and Mahommedan traditions are agreed that the aggressor in the struggle between the good God and the bad was the Evil One. The Mahommedan source, here fuller than the Christian, tells us that the Darkness remained in an unorganized condition for ages, although consisting of the five members enumerated above. These parts, however, seem to have sunk down and produced another Earth called the Darker Earth, from which in course of time came forth Satan. Satan was not, like the King of the Paradise of Light, without beginning, but came into being from the union of these five members of Darkness, having the head of a lion, the body of a serpent, the wings of a bird, the tail of a fish, and four feet like those of crawling animals<sup>2</sup>, in which figure we may see a kind of reflection of the Mithraic Ahriman<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> En Nadîm in Kessler, *op. cit.* p. 387; Flügel, *op. cit.* p. 86. Flügel's text adds to these members other "souls" which he names Love, Belief, Faith, Generosity, and Wisdom. Kessler substitutes Courage for Generosity and seems to make these "souls" the members' derivatives.

<sup>2</sup> See last note.

<sup>3</sup> See Chapter XII, p. 251 *supra*. Here, again, the traditional and monstrous figure of Satan may have been copied from the sculptured representations of the composite demons of Babylonia (e.g. Rogers, *Religion of Babylonia*

Satan, on his emergence on the Darker Earth, perceived the rays of light from the upper world, piercing as we may suppose through the gloomy atmosphere of his own world, and conceived a hatred for them. Seeing, too, that these rays gained much in strength by their combination and mutual support, he withdrew within himself so as to unite himself more closely with his members<sup>1</sup>. Then again springing upwards, he invaded the realms of Light with the intention of there spreading calamity and destruction. The aeon—or world as the *Fihrist* calls it—of Discernment was the first to be aware of this invasion<sup>2</sup>, and reported it to the aeon Knowledge, from whom it passed to the others in turn until it at last reached the ear of the Good God, here, as elsewhere in the *Fihrist*, called the King of the Paradise of Light. With the aid of the Spirit of his Right Hand, of his five worlds or members before mentioned, and of his twelve elements, of which we have before heard nothing<sup>3</sup>, he made the First Man, clothing him by way of armour with the five “species” or powers of the celestial earth, and *Assyria*, Frontispiece and Figs. 1 and 13). Yet if we take the Mithraic lion, as M. Cumont would have us do, as the symbol of fire and the serpent as that of the earth, we have in the five sorts of animals the five στοιχεῖα or elements of Aristotle. Cf. Aetius, *de Placitis Philosophorum*, ed. Didot, Bk I. c. iii. § 38 (Plutarch, *Moralia*, II.), p. 1069. Yet the nearest source from which Manes could have borrowed the idea is certainly Bardesanes, who, according to Bar Khôni and another Syriac author, taught that the world was made from five substances, i.e. fire, air, water, light and darkness. See Pognon, *op. cit.* p. 178; Cumont, *La Cosmogonie Manichéenne d'après Théodore bar Khôni*, Bruxelles, 1908, p. 13, n. 2.

<sup>1</sup> En Nadim in Kessler, *op. cit.* p. 388; Flügel, *op. cit.* p. 87. As the ancients were unacquainted with the properties of gases, it is singular that they should have formed such a conception as that of the compressibility and expansibility of spirits. Yet the idea is a very old one, and the Arabian Nights story of the Genius imprisoned in a brass bottle has its parallel in the bowls with magical inscriptions left by the Jews on the site of Babylon (Layard, *Nineveh and Babylon*, 1853, pp. 509 *sqq.*), between pairs of which demons were thought to be imprisoned. Cf. Pognon, *op. cit.* p. 3. Something of the kind seems indicated in the “Little Point,” from which all material powers spring, referred to by Hippolytus and the Bruce Papyrus.

<sup>2</sup> So in the *Pistis Sophia*, it is the “last Parastates” or assistant world who breathes light into the Keramos, and thus sets on foot the scheme of redemption. Cf. Chapter X, p. 146 *supra*.

<sup>3</sup> Yet the Fundamental Epistle speaks of the twelve “members” of God, which seem to convey the same idea. See *Aug. c. Ep. Fund.* c. 13.

the Breeze, Wind, Light, Water and Fire as before enumerated<sup>1</sup>. With these He despatched him to fight Satan, who in his turn did on his armour in the shape of *his* five "species," Smoke, Flame, Poison, Hot Wind, and Gloom<sup>2</sup>. The fight lasted

<sup>1</sup> Thus En Nadîm in Kessler, *op. cit.* pp. 388, 389; Flügel, *op. cit.* p. 87. But here the Christian tradition gives more details than the Mahommedan. Hegemonius, *Acta*, c. vii., p. 10, Beeson, and Bar Khôni (Pognon, p. 185), are in accord that the God of Light produced from himself a new Power called the *Μήτηρ τῆς Ζωῆς* or Mother of Life, that this Mother of Life projected the First Man, and that the First Man produced the five elements called also his "sons," to wit, wind, light, water, fire and air, with which he clothed himself as with armour. See Cumont, *Cosmog. Manich.* p. 16, n. 4, for the harmonizing of the texts [N.B. the omission of *πῦρ* from his quotation from the *Acta* is doubtless a clerical error]. The identification of the Mother of Life with the "Spirit of the Right [Hand]" is accepted by Bousset, *Hauptprobleme*, pp. 177, 178, and may be accounted for by the crude figure by which the Egyptians explained the coming-forth of the universe from a single male power. See Budge, *Hieratic Papyri in the Brit. Mus.* p. 17.

<sup>2</sup> These were also the "sons" of Darkness or Satan. See Bar Khôni (Pognon, p. 186). The reason that led the God of Light to send a champion into the lists was, according to Bar Khôni (Pognon, p. 185), that the five worlds of his creation were made for peace and tranquillity and could therefore not help him directly in the matter. Cf. St Augustine, *de Natura Boni*, c. xlii. But Manes doubtless found it necessary to work into his system the figure of the First Man which we have already seen prominent in the Ophite system. Cumont, *Cosmog. Manich.* p. 16, says few conceptions were more widely spread throughout the East. It is fully examined by Bousset, *Hauptprobleme*, in his xvth chapter, "Der Urmensch." The First Man is, in the Chinese treatise lately found at Tun-huang in circumstances to be presently mentioned, identified with the Persian Ormuzd and the five elements are there declared to be his sons. See Chavannes and Pelliot, *Un Traité Manichéen retrouvé en Chine*, pt 1, *Journal Asiatique*, série x., t. xviii. (1911), pp. 512, 513. The 12 elements which helped in his formation seem to be mentioned by no other author than En Nadîm. St Augustine, however, *Contra Epistolam Fundamenti*, c. 13, speaks of the "12 members of light." The Tun-huang treatise also mentions "the 12 great kings of victorious form" whom it seems to liken to the 12 hours of the day. As the *Pistis Sophia* does the same with the "12 Aeons" who are apparently the signs of the Zodiac, it is possible that we here have a sort of super-celestial Zodiac belonging to the Paradise of Light, of which that in our sky is a copy. It should be remembered that in the Asiatic

long, but in the end Satan triumphed, and dragged the First Man down into the Realm of Darkness, where he took from him his light<sup>1</sup>. During the fight, too, the elements had become mingled, so that the Ether henceforth was mixed with the Smoke, the Fire with the Flame, the Light with the Darkness, the Wind with the Hot Wind, and the Cloud with the Water. This it is which brings about the confusion or mixture seen in the present world, wherein everything which is beautiful, pure, or useful, such as gold and silver, comes from the armour of the First Man, and everything foul, impure, and gross, from that of his infernal opponent<sup>2</sup>. After the fight, the King of the Paradise of Light descended with another Power called the Friend of the Lights, who overthrew Satan, and the Spirit of the Right Hand or Mother of Life recalled, either by her voice or by another power called the Living Spirit, the First Man from his prison in the lowest Darkness. The First Man, on his deliverance, in this account mounts again to the Realms of Light, but before doing so "cuts the roots" of the Five Infernal

cosmogonies the fixed stars belong to the realm of good as the representatives of order, while the planets or "wanderers" are generally evil.

<sup>1</sup> En Nadim in Kessler, *op. cit.* p. 389; Flügel, *op. cit.* pp. 87, 88. According to the Christian tradition, the Powers of Darkness devoured only the soul of the First Man which was left below when his body, as will presently be seen, returned to the upper world. See Hegemonius, *Acta*, c. vii., p. 10, Beeson.

<sup>2</sup> Both the Christian and the Mahomedan traditions agree as to this result of the fight, which is paralleled not only by the more or less successful attempt of Jaldabaoth and his powers to *eat* the light of Pistis Sophia, but also by a similar case in orthodox Zoroastrianism. For all these see Cumont, *Cosmog. Manich.* p. 18, n. 4. Bar Khôni (Pognon, p. 186), goes further and describes the surrender of the First Man as a tactical effort on his part, "as a man who having an enemy puts poison in a cake and gives it to him." Alexander of Lycopolis (*adv. Manich.* c. iii.), on the other hand declares that God could not avenge himself upon matter (as he calls Darkness) as he wished, because he had no evil at hand to help him, "since evil does not exist in the house and abode of God"; that he therefore sent the soul into matter which will eventually permeate it and be the death of it; but that in the meantime the soul is changed for the worse and participates in the evil of matter, "as in a dirty vessel the contents suffer change." These, however, are more likely to be the ideas of the Christian accusers than the defences of the Manichaean teachers.

Elements so that they can no more increase<sup>1</sup>. Then the King of the Paradise of Light orders an angel to draw the Confusion or Mixture of the Elements to that part of the Realm of Darkness which touches the Realm of Light, and to create out of it the present world, so as to deliver the imprisoned elements of Light from the Darkness with which they are contaminated. This is done, and a Universe having six heavens and eight earths is formed, each heaven having twelve gates, together with terraces, corridors, and places in such profusion as to point to some confusion in the translation into the Syriac which has come down to us. The only thing that concerns us in this, perhaps, is that the visible world, presumably the lowest of the eight, has a ditch dug round it in which is thrown the Matter of Darkness as it is separated from the Light, and outside this a wall so that it cannot escape. This is in view of the End of the World<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> En Nadīm in Kessler, *op. cit.* pp. 389, 390; Flügel, *op. cit.* p. 87. As Kessler points out, En Nadīm gives two accounts doubtless taken from different Manichaean sources. In one, he says simply that the King of the Paradise of Light followed with other gods and delivered the First Man, the actual victor over Darkness being called "the Friend" of the Lights (like Mithras). He then goes on to say that Joy (i.e. the Mother of Life) and the Spirit of Life went to the frontier, looked into the abyss of hell and saw the First Man and his powers were held enlaced by Satan, "the Presumptuous Oppressor and the Life of Darkness"; then she called him in a loud and clear voice, and he became a god, after which he returned and "cut the roots of the Dark Powers." For Bar Khôni's amplification of this story see p. 302, n. 1, and p. 324 *infra*. The whole of this, together with the cutting of the roots, is strongly reminiscent of the *Pistis Sophia*.

<sup>2</sup> En Nadīm in Kessler, *op. cit.* pp. 391, 392; Flügel, *op. cit.* p. 98. The *Acta* (Hegemonius, *op. cit.* c. viii., p. 11, Beeson) say that the "Living Spirit" before mentioned "created the Cosmos, descended clothed with three other powers, drew forth the rulers (*οἱ ἀρχόντες*) and crucified them in the firmament which is their body the Sphere." "Then he created the lights (*φωστῆρες*) which are the remnants of the soul, caused the firmament to encompass them, and again created the earth [not the Cosmos] with its eight aspects." The Latin version after "earth" adds "they (*sic*!) are eight," which if it refers to the aspects would agree with En Nadīm. Alexander of Lycopolis (*adv. Manich.* c. III.), who had been a follower of Manes and was a Christian bishop some 25 years after Manes' death, says that "God sent forth another power which we call the Demiurge or creator of all things; that this Demiurge in creating the Cosmos separated from matter as much power as was unstained, and from it made the Sun and

So far there is no great difference—at all events, no irreconcilable difference—between the Christian and the Mahomedan accounts of Manes' doctrines. The machinery set up for the process of the redemption of the light, however, differs somewhat conspicuously in the two traditions. The Mahomedan writers declare that in Manes' teaching the Sun and Moon were created for the purification of the Light, the Sun drawing to itself those light-elements which had become contaminated by the demons of heat and flame and the Moon exercising a like attraction on those which had suffered from the embrace of Satan's other powers. Both luminaries bear these elements into the Column of Praises or Glory which is perpetually mounting from the Sun to the World of Light, bearing with it the praises of men, their hymns of gratitude, and their pure words and good works<sup>1</sup>. This will continue until

Moon; and that the slightly stained matter became the stars and the expanse of heaven." "The matter from which the Sun and Moon were taken," he goes on to say, "was cast out of the Cosmos and resembles night" [Qy the Outer Darkness?], while the rest of the "elements" consists of light and matter unequally mingled. Bar Khôni (Pognon, *op. cit.* p. 188), as will presently be seen, says that the Living Spirit with the Mother of Life and two other powers called the Appellant and Respondent [evidently the "three other powers" of the *Acta*] descended to earth, caused the Rulers or Princes to be killed and flayed, and that out of their skins the Mother of Life made 11 heavens, while their bodies were cast on to the earth of darkness and made 8 earths. The Living Spirit then made the Sun, the Moon, and "thousands of Lights" (*i.e.* Stars) out of the light he took from the Rulers. That this last story is an elaboration of the earlier ones seems likely, and the flaying of the Rulers seems to be reminiscent of the Babylonian legend of Bel and Tiamat, an echo of which is also to be found in the later Avestic literature. See West, *Pahlavi Texts* (S.B.E.), pt iii. p. 243. Cf. Cumont, *Cosmog. Manich.* p. 27, n. 2.

<sup>1</sup> En Nadim in Kessler, *op. cit.* p. 392; Flügel, *op. cit.* pp. 89-90. This would agree perfectly with the system of the *Pistis Sophia*, where it is said that the "receivers of the Sun and Moon" give the particles of the light as it is won from matter to Melchizedek, the purifier, who purifies it before taking it into the Treasure-house (pp. 36, 37, Copt.). The idea that the Sun's rays had a purifying effect shows shrewd observation of nature before his bactericidal power was discovered by science. So does the association of the Moon with water, which doubtless came from the phenomenon of the tides. Is the Column of Glory the Milky Way?



none but a feeble fragment of the Light remains in this world, when the angels charged with its maintenance will abandon their task, and return to the World of Light. A fire will then break out, which will burn for 1468 years and will set free the remainder of the Light imprisoned in matter by consuming its envelope. Satan or Hummâma, the Spirit of Darkness, will then acknowledge his defeat, and will be driven into the tomb prepared for him, the entrance to which will be closed with a stone the size of the world<sup>1</sup>. In the Christian tradition these matters are more complicated, and Manes is said to have taught that there exists a great wheel bearing twelve vases or buckets after the fashion of an Egyptian *sakiyeh*, which raise the redeemed portions of Light to the Sun, who gives them to the Moon, who in her turn delivers them to the Aeons of the Light, who place them in the Column of Glory here called the Perfect Air<sup>2</sup>. The Christian account is also more detailed with regard to the functions of the angels charged with the conduct of the world, making out that one of them supports this earth on his shoulders and is therefore called Omophorus, great earthquakes and commotions taking place when from weariness he shifts his burthen from one shoulder to the other, while another, called

<sup>1</sup> The Ecpyrosis or final conflagration is always present in orthodox Mazdeism, where it inspires its Apocalypses, and is in effect the necessary conclusion to the drama which begins with the assault on the world of light by Ahriman. For references, see Söderblom, *op. cit.* chap. iv. From the Persians it probably passed to the Stoics and thus reached the Western world slightly in advance of Christianity. "The day when the Great Dragon shall be judged" is continually on the lips of the authors of the *Pistis Sophia* and the Μέγος τευχὼν Σερπίδος, and the conception may therefore have reached Manes from two sources at once. The angels maintaining the world as mentioned in the text are of course the Splenditenens and Omophorus about to be described.

<sup>2</sup> Hegemonius, *Acta*, c. viii. p. 12, Beeson. St Augustine (*contra Faustum*, Bk xx. c. 10) mentions the Wheel briefly and rather obscurely. It seems to have fallen out of the account of Bar Khôni. But see the Tun-huang treatise (Chavannes et Pelliot, *op. cit.* I<sup>re</sup> partie, pp. 515, n. 2, 516, 517, n. 3). There can be little doubt that it is to be referred to the Zodiac. The Aeons of the Light seem to be the five worlds who here play the part of the Parastatae in the *Pistis Sophia*.

Splenditenens, holds the heavens by their backs<sup>1</sup>. The stars are also in the Christian tradition fashioned out of the purer part of the Light which was *not* captured by the Satanic powers, whereas the Mahommedan tradition says nothing about their origin<sup>2</sup>. The Christian writers also make the Manichaeans tell a story about the appearance of a beautiful virgin who appears to the male and female devils who were crucified or fixed in this world on the deliverance of the First Man. She appears to the male fiends as a beautiful woman and to the female as a desirable young man; and when they covet and pursue her, she flies from them and disappears. The anger of the Great Archon or Satan on this causes the appearance of clouds in

<sup>1</sup> Hegemonius, *Acta*, c. viii. pp. 11, 12, Beeson, mentions Omophorus, but not Splenditenens. Splenditenens is, however, well known to St Augustine, who describes him (*contra Faustum*, Bk xv. c. 7) as *Splenditenentem magnum, sex vultus et ora ferentem, micantemque lumine*, "Great Splenditenens, bearing six faces and mouths, and glittering with light." So later (*op. cit.* Bk xx. c. 9) he says, *Splenditenentem, reliquias eorumdem membrorum Dei vestri in manu habentem, et cetera omnia capta, oppressa, inquinata plangentem, et Atlantem maximum subter humeris suis cum eo ferentem, ne totum ille fatigatus abjiciat*. "Splenditenens, who has in his hand the remains of these members of your God [i.e. the five elements or "sons" of the First Man] and who mourns the capture and oppression and defilement of all the rest; and huge Atlas, who bears everything with him on his shoulders, lest he should be wearied and cast it away." Bar Khôni (Pognon, pp. 188, 189) describes them both, and calls Splenditenens "the Ornament of Splendour," while he makes the pair two of the five sons of the Living Spirit, as more clearly appears in the Tunhuang treatise (Chavannes et Pelliot, *op. cit.* p. 549, and notes 2 and 5). Where Manes found the figure of Splenditenens is not apparent, but the world-bearing angel is an old conception in Western Asia, as M. Cumont has shown in his before-quoted *Cosmogonie Manichéenne*, App. II. He appears prominently on the Mithraic monuments and was no doubt the original of the Greek Atlas.

<sup>2</sup> Alexander of Lycopolis, *op. cit.* c. iii., says plainly that the Sun and Moon were formed out of that part of the light (here called *δύναμις* "power"), which, although it had been captured by the powers of matter, had not been contaminated, while that which had suffered some slight and moderate stain became the stars and sky. The *Acta* (Hegemonius, *op. cit.* c. viii. p. 11, Beeson), as we have seen, says that the Living Spirit created the lights (*φωστῆρες*, luminaria), which are the remnants of the soul (i.e. the armour of the First Man) and caused the firmament to surround them. The author here evidently refers to the Sun and Moon only.

this world and thereby obscures the Sun's light, whilst his sweat becomes rain<sup>1</sup>.

On the origin of terrestrial man, there is also considerable discrepancy between the two streams of tradition. The Mahommedan tells us that Adam was born from the conjunction of one of "these Archons" or Princes, and a star. Nothing is said to tell us what is meant by "these" princes, but as the phrase is used in other passages by the same writer to denote the Satanic hierarchy one can but suppose that it is one of the rulers of darkness who is here indicated<sup>2</sup>. The same writer goes on to say that the conjunction was "beheld" [or aided?] by a pair of Archons, one male and the other female, and that a second similar conjunction resulted in the birth of Eve. There is evidently a reference here to some legend of which we have lost the trace<sup>3</sup>, and the Christian tradition assigns to Adam an entirely different origin and declares that he was made by all the "princes" or archons on the advice of one of their number, who persuaded the others to give up some of the light they had received which they knew would otherwise be taken from them and to make from it man in their own image and after the form of the "First Man" against whom they had fought with temporary success<sup>4</sup>. This story is clearly the same as that which we have already seen current among the Ophites, and it now seems most probable that it here appears not—as was once

<sup>1</sup> The whole of this story, which is the reverse of edifying, is studied by M. Cumont, with the fullest references to the authorities, in his *Cosmogonie Manichéenne* before quoted, to which it forms Appendix I, under the heading "La Séduction des Archontes." To this I must refer the reader, only remarking that, while I fully agree that the goddess in question is probably derived from the Mother of the Gods who under the name (*inter alia*) of Atargatis was worshipped throughout Asia Minor, I do not see that she had any connection with the "Virgin of Light" of the *Pistis Sophia*. This Virgin of Light did, indeed, pass into Manichaeism, but she had there a very different name and attributes from the Mother of the Gods. See p. 323, n. 4 *infra*.

<sup>2</sup> En Nadīm in Kessler, *op. cit.* p. 393; Flügel, *op. cit.* pp. 90, 91.

<sup>3</sup> Kessler, *op. et pag. cit.* n. 1, says it has dropped out of the text, which seems likely.

<sup>4</sup> Hegemonius, *Acta*, c. xii. pp. 19, 20, Beeson. The story is given *verbatim* later, p. 306 *infra*.

thought—as an interpolation foisted into the teaching of Manes by the Christian writer, but because both Ophite and Manichaeans derived the story independently of each other from legends current in Western Asia<sup>1</sup>.

The Mahommedan writer then plunges into a long and elaborate account of how the “Five Angels,” meaning thereby apparently the “members” Gentleness, Knowledge, Intelligence, Discretion and Discernment, on beholding Adam and Eve, prayed to certain powers which seem to be those which descended with the King of the Paradise of Light after the defeat of the First Man properly so called. These Powers include the First Man himself and the Mother of Life<sup>2</sup>, and the

<sup>1</sup> The Mandaeans or Disciples of St John described on p. 305 seem a likely source, as they have many traditions about the protoplasts, some of which clearly go back to before the Christian Era. None of those mentioned by Brandt, *Die Mandäische Religion*, Leipzig, 1889, pp. 34–39, however, seem to be exactly similar to the story in the text.

<sup>2</sup> This Mother of Life is one of the most prominent, though not one of the most active figures in the Manichaean pantheon. Her identification with the Spirit of the Right Hand or first Power created by the Supreme God of Light has been mentioned above (note 1, p. 293 *supra*). She doubtless has her immediate origin in the great mother goddess worshipped throughout Western Asia, whose most familiar name is Cybele, but whom we have seen (Chap. II *supra*) identified with Isis, Demeter, and all the goddesses of the Hellenistic pantheon. See as to this, Bousset, *Hauptprobleme*, pp. 58 *sqq.*, although he, too, falls into the error of identifying with her the Virgin of Light of the *Pistis Sophia*. That the name “Mother of Life” at least passed to all these goddesses is certain; but it also found its way into Egyptian Christianity; for in the Coptic spell or amulet known as the *Prayer of the Virgin in Bartos* (i.e. Parthia), studied by Mr W. E. Crum (*P.S.B.A.* vol. XIX. 1897, p. 216), the Virgin Mary is represented as saying “I am Mariham (Μαριάμ), I am Maria, I am the Mother of the Life of the whole World!”, and the popularity of the “Prayer” is shown by its frequent appearance in Ethiopic and Arabic versions (*op. cit.* p. 211). So, too, in the evidently Christian *Trattato Gnostico* of F. Rossi (*Memorie della Reale Accademia di Torino*, ser. II. t. xliii. p. 16) the magician says “I entreat thee, O God, by the great revered Virgin (παρθένος) in whom the Father was concealed from the beginning before He had created anything.” Bar Khôni, again (Pognon, pp. 209–211), speaks of the Kukeans, who seem to have been a semi-Christian sect, and who taught that the coming of Jesus to earth had for its object the redemption of His bride, the Mother of Life, who was detained here below, like the Helena of Simon Magnus.

The Mother of Life is mentioned in all the Mahomedan and Christian writers who have treated of Manichaeism (for the references, see Chavannes et Pelliot, *op. cit.* 1<sup>ère</sup> partie, p. 511, n. 1), in the Pahlavi MS. discovered by the Germans at Turfan (F. W. K. Muller, *Handschriften-Reste in Estrangelo-Schrift*, pp. 47, 55), and in the Chinese treatise from Tun-huang (Chavannes et Pelliot, *op. cit.* p. 511 *et al.*). In this last, she is called Chan-mou, which is translated "the Excellent Mother," and En Nadim in one passage (Kessler, *op. cit.* p. 399; Flügel, *op. cit.* p. 100) calls her Nahnaha, which Flügel would translate "The Aversion of the Evil Ones." It should be noticed, however, that her part in the cosmogony is small, and that she acts upon the world, like all these supercelestial powers, only through her descendants or "sons." These are treated of later (see p. 323 and n. 1, p. 302 *infra*). Titus of Bostra as quoted by Flügel, *op. cit.* p. 210, speaks of her as δύναμις τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ οὐκ ἐστὶ φῶς αἰσθητὸν ἀλλ' ὥς ἂν φαίη προβολὴ τοῦ θεοῦ. "[The] Power of the Good One, no longer a perceptible light, but as if one should say, an emanation of God." Some years ago, we could hardly have looked for her prototype or first appearance in the history of religions in any other direction than Babylonia, where the worship of Ishtar, her Babylonian counterpart, goes back as far as we can trace Babylonian religion. Now, however, it is plain that other races than the Babylonians may have been concerned in the spread of the worship of the Great Mother throughout Western Asia. In the Zoroastrian faith, she seems to appear as Spenta Armaiti, the one certainly female power among the seven Amshaspands, who in the Pahlavi texts is set over the earth, as Vohu Mano is made protector of the beasts, Asha Vahishta of the fire, and Khshathra Vairya is set over metals. But besides this, she is identified in the Gāthās with the Wisdom of God (for references see pp. 136-137 of M. Carnoy's article in the *Muséon* mentioned below), an identification which Plutarch (*de Is. et Os.* c. XLVII.) admits by translating her name as σοφία, and like the Sophia of the Gnostics is given as a spouse to her creator Ahura Mazda, to whom she bears the First Man Gayōmōrt (Darmesteter, *Le Zend-Avesta*, t. I. pp. 128-129). Yet we now know that this figure may have come into the Zoroastrian pantheon neither from Semitic sources nor, as Darmesteter thought, from Plato. M. A. Carnoy in a study called *Armaiti-Ârmatay* (*Muséon*, n.s. vol. XIII. (1912), pp. 127-146) shows the identity of the Persian Amshaspand with the Vedic goddess Aramati. We have already seen that the Vedic gods Varuna and Mitra were worshipped by Hittites in Asia Minor before the ninth century B.C., and Prof. Garstang believes that the Earth-Mother was the great goddess of the Hittites, and was the one worshipped in Roman times at Hierapolis or Mabug as the *Dea Syria* or Atargatis, a name that he equates with Derceto, the mother of Semiramis in classic legend, and declares to be compounded of Ishtar or Astarte and the Aramaic "Athar or Athe." See Strong and Garstang, *The Syrian Goddess*, pp. 1-8, and notes 24, 25, and 30, on pp. 52, 53 and 30 *op.*

Living Spirit<sup>1</sup>, and were besought by the Five to send to earth a Saviour who should give Adam and Eve Knowledge and

*cit.* Zoroaster and Manes may therefore have taken their mother goddess from an Aryan rather than from a Semitic original.

<sup>1</sup> This Living Spirit is the most active agent of the Light in the Manichaean system, and seems to have held his place unaltered through all the changes of Manichaean teaching. Alexander of Lycopolis (*contra Manich.* c. III.) speaks of him as the *Δημιουργός* or Architect of the Universe. The earliest part of the *Acta* (Hegemonius, c. VII. p. 10, Beeson) says that he was put forth from the Father (or Supreme God of Light) in consequence of the prayers of the First Man after his defeat, that he delivered this last, crucified or bound the Archons in the firmament (as Jehu is said to have done in the *Pistis Sophia*), made the Sun and Moon and appointed their courses, and further made the eight earths. St Augustine, *contra Faustum*, Bk XX. c. 1, makes the Manichaean Faustus call him the "Third Majesty whom we acknowledge to have his seat and his lodging-place in the whole circle of the atmosphere. From whose powers and spiritual inpouring also, the earth conceived and brought forth the suffering Jesus who is the life and salvation of men and is hanging on every tree." St Augustine further speaks (*op. cit.* Bk XX. c. 9) of "your mighty (*potentem* for *viventem*) Spirit, who constructs the world from the captive bodies of the race of darkness or rather from the members of your God held in subjection and bondage." St Augustine (see *contra Faustum*, Bk XV. c. 6) also knows that the Living Spirit has, like the First Man, five sons, to whom we shall return later. The Mahomedan writers have much less to say on the subject. En Nadim (Kessler, *op. cit.* p. 390; Flügel, *op. cit.* p. 88) says abruptly that "Joy [*i.e.* the Mother of Life] and the Spirit of Life went to the frontier, looked into the abyss of hell and saw there the First Man and his angels," whereupon the Spirit of Life called the First Man with a voice of thunder and the latter "became a god." This story is so without connection with the context that Kessler is probably right in attributing it to another source from that from which the *Fihrist* has drawn up to this point. The source in question was probably a late one; for Bar Khôni (*op. cit.* pp. 186-188) supplies many more details which will be given in the text. Bar Khôni also amplifies the story in the *Fihrist* into a description of how the Living Spirit, on seeing the First Man in the Darkness, spoke "a word which took the appearance of a pointed sword" (cf. Revelation i. 16), and how this word caused to appear the image of the First Man. A dialogue then ensues between apparently the sword and the image, which appear to be here identified with the Appellant and Respondent of later Manichaeism, and the pair are drawn up out of hell. See Camont, *Cosmog. Manich.* p. 24, and note 5. Al Bîrûnî, *Chronology*, p. 190, also knows of the Spirit of Life and says that Manes "preached" of him. In the Turfan texts there is occasional mention of the "Spirit"

Goodness and deliver them from the devils. Their prayer was heard, and Jesus was sent upon earth "accompanied by a god," with whose aid the Archons were again overthrown and imprisoned, while Adam and Eve were set free<sup>1</sup>. Jesus then addressed Adam and revealed to him the whole secret of the cosmogony, enlightening him upon the origin and functions of the different heavenly worlds or paradises, of the gods, of hell, of the devils, of the earth and sky, and of the sun and moon. He then showed him, continues the Mahommedan tradition, the seductive power of Eve, put him on his guard against it, and breathed into him the fear of yielding to it. Adam, it is said, listened to these commands obediently.

The result of this abstinence on Adam's part—we are still pursuing the Mahommedan account of the Manichaean teaching—was seen in the sequel. The Archon or Demon who was practically the father of the present race of mankind became enamoured of Eve, and engendering with her begot a son "ugly and of a reddish colour," who was named Cain. Cain in turn had relations with his mother Eve, and from this incest was born a son of white colour who was named Abel. From the further intercourse of Cain and Eve were born two daughters, one called "the Wisdom of the World," and the other "the Daughter of Pleasure." Cain took the last-named to wife and gave the other in marriage to Abel; but he did not know that

together with the Father and the Son (Müller, *Handschriften-Reste*, pp. 26, 28), and also of the "commands" of the Holy Spirit to the Hearers, which are plainly allusions to the Living Spirit or *Zôv Πνεῦμα* of the Christian Fathers. In the Tun-huang treatise (Chavannes et Pelliot, *op. cit.* pp. 510, 556) he is repeatedly mentioned, and although nothing is said of his demiurgic or world-creating powers, the part which he and the Mother of Life play in the rescue of the First Man after his defeat is recognized, and he is spoken of as forming the third person of a Trinity of which the two other members are the Father or highest God of Light and the "Son of the Light." Finally (*op. cit.* p. 557), he is said to be "a white dove," whereby his likeness to the Holy Spirit of the Christian Trinity already noted by Faustus is emphasized (see Augustine, *ubi cit. supra* and Bk xx. c. 6).

<sup>1</sup> This conception of Jesus as a warrior has already been seen in the *Pistis Sophia*, see p. 156 *supra*. So we read of "Jesus the victorious" in the Tun-huang treatise, p. 566, n. 3.

the Wisdom of the World was filled with Light and divine wisdom, while the Daughter of Pleasure possessed nothing of the kind. In the sequel, one of the Angels had relations with the Wisdom of the World and begot two daughters, called Help (Farjâd) and Bringer of Help (Barfarjâd). Abel accused Cain of being the father of these girls, whereupon Cain killed him and took the "Wisdom of the World" as his own second wife. The Rulers of Darkness were annoyed at this, and the "Great Devil," here called Sindîd, taught Eve magical formulas by the aid of which she again enticed Adam to intercourse. The result was a son "beautiful and of an agreeable countenance," whom Eve wished to kill as having nothing of the Archons in him. Adam arranged to have the child fed exclusively on milk and fruits, and drew three magic circles round him bearing the names of the King of the Paradise of Light, the First Man, and the Spirit of Life respectively, to protect him against the devils. He then went to a high place and entreated God for him, whereupon one of the Three Powers last named appeared and gave him a Crown of Glory, at the sight of which Sindîd and the Archons fled away. Then a tree appeared to Adam called the Lotus, from which he drew milk with which to nourish his son whom he called first after the tree, and then Seth (Schâthîl). Eve, on the instigation of Sindîd, again persuaded Adam to intercourse, which so disgusted Seth that he took with him the Wisdom of the World, her two daughters Help and Bringer of Help, and "Siddikût," which seems to be the community of the elect or Perfect Manichaeans, and journeyed to the East in search of the Divine Light and Wisdom. At their death all these entered into Paradise, while Eve, Cain, and the daughters of Desire went to hell<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> En Nadîm in Kessler, *op. cit.* pp. 393 *sqq.*; Flügel, *op. cit.* pp. 90 *sqq.* Theodore bar Khôni (Pognon, *op. cit.* pp. 189 *sqq.*), gives a much more elaborate account of the creation of man and the other animals, for which and for its explanation the reader must be referred to the elaborate analysis of M. Cumont (*Cosmog. Manich.* pp. 34-49, and App. II., "La Séduction des Archontes"). It should be noted, however, that some part of this story was known to St Augustine. See especially *contra Faustum*, Bk VI. c. 8.



The story about the protoplasts of the Book of Genesis has been given in more detail than it perhaps deserves because of its manifest connection with the doctrines of the extant sect of Mandaites, Hemerobaptists, or Disciples of St John still to be found in certain villages near the Shât-el-Arab and even in considerable towns like Bussora. These sectaries declare themselves to have inherited the faith of John the Baptist, and have a sacred book called the Sidra Rabba, which has been known to Europeans since the xviii<sup>th</sup> century, and contains, among other things, many stories like those given above. The Mandaites are a violently anti-Christian sect, and say that the historical Jesus was a fiend who obtained baptism from St John the Baptist by means of a trick, and they display a similar hatred of the religions of both the Jews and the Mahommedans. Nevertheless, most modern writers consider them related to, and perhaps the modern representatives of, the Mughtasilah or "Washers<sup>1</sup>." This last sect is certainly very ancient, and its history can in fact be traced as far back as the beginning of the reign of Trajan<sup>2</sup>, while the Mahommedan author, from whom the traditional account of Manes' doctrines has been quoted above, says that Manes was in his youth one of the Mughtasilah. From this Prof. Kessler, who perhaps devoted more attention to the Manichaean religion than any living scholar, built up the theory that the doctrines of the Mughtasilah were one of the principal sources from which Manes formed his system. He even says that the Fatak or Patecius whom tradition gives as a father to Manes must be identified with that Scythianus or Terebinthus whom the Christian tradition makes Fatak's predecessor, was one of the Mughtasilah, and helped Manes both in the construction of his system and in its propagation<sup>3</sup>. This may be so, but very little evidence is available in support of the theory; and the points which the Mandaites and the Manichaeans undoubtedly possess in common do not seem to

<sup>1</sup> So Rochat, *op. cit.* pp. 157, 158.

<sup>2</sup> Kessler, *op. cit.* pp. 72, 80; Brandt, *Manäische Religion*, p. 178.

<sup>3</sup> Rochat, *op. cit.* pp. 156-178, has carefully examined the resemblances between the system of Manes and that of the Mandaites and declares that it is at present impossible to say which of them has borrowed from the other.

be more than can be explained by the contact which must necessarily have taken place between two neighbouring sects both persecuted successively by Persian Shahs, Christian Emperors, and Mahommedan Caliphs. The Christian tradition of Manes' teaching concerning the protoplasts says merely that "he who said 'Let us make man in our own image'" was the same Prince of Darkness who thereby counselled the other Archons to give up their light in order to make man in the likeness

"of the form that we have seen, that is to say, of the First Man. And in that manner," it continues, "he created the man. They created Eve also after the like fashion, imparting to her of their own lust, with a view to the deceiving of Adam. And by these means the construction of the world proceeded from the operations of the Prince<sup>1</sup>."

The teaching of Manes with regard to Jesus is not very clear in the Christian tradition, no doubt because the writers who recorded it were careful to remove from it as much as possible everything which in their view savoured of blasphemy. Yet the Christian author before quoted makes Manes say that the God of Light whom he calls "the Good Father" sent his well-beloved son upon earth for the salvation of man's soul and "because of Omophorus" or the world-sustaining angel. This son, by whom he can hardly mean any other than the historical Jesus, "came and transformed himself into the semblance of a man and showed himself to men as a man, although he was not a man, and men imagined that he had been begotten<sup>2</sup>." It is also to Him that is attributed the construction of the wonderful wheel before alluded to as equipped with twelve vases which the sphere causes to revolve, and which thus scoops up, as it were, the souls of the dying<sup>3</sup>. The Christian account also narrates that in

"the Paradise which is called the Cosmos [Qy the "heavenly" earth or the Sun?], there are trees such as Desire and other deceits,

<sup>1</sup> Hegemonius, *Acta*, c. xii., pp. 19, 20, Beeson.

<sup>2</sup> *Op. cit.* c. viii., p. 12, Beeson.

<sup>3</sup> Chavannes et Pelliot (*op. cit.* p. 517, n. 3) make this the work of the Living Spirit, but they are clearly wrong. The text of the *Acta* referred to in the last note leaves no doubt that it is that of the "Son."

whereby the minds of those men [those who reach it?] are corrupted. But the tree in Paradise, whereby they know the good, is Jesus and the knowledge of Him which is in the Cosmos. And whoso receives it, distinguishes between good and evil. Yet the Cosmos itself is not of God, but it was made from portions of matter, and therefore all things in it will disappear<sup>1</sup>."

There is not really any very great difference between this and the Mahommedan tradition quoted above which makes Jesus the messenger sent from above to give knowledge to Adam, especially if we consider that Manes probably, like most of the Gnostics, placed Paradise not upon the earth but in one of the heavens intermediate between us and the abode of the Supreme Being<sup>2</sup>. That Manes supposed Jesus to have descended to this earth also is plain from his own words quoted by Al Bîrûnî from the *Shapurakan* or book written by Manes for King Sapor:

"Wisdom and deeds have always from time to time been brought to mankind by the messenger of God. So in one age they have been brought by the messenger called Buddha to India, in another by Zaradusht [*i.e.* Zoroaster] to Persia, in another by Jesus to the West. Thereupon this revelation has come down, this prophecy in this last age through me, Mânî, the messenger of the God of Truth to Babylonia<sup>3</sup>."

Manes' ideas as to the salvation of man's soul again differ little in the two streams of tradition. The Christian, here perhaps the fuller of the two, describes him as teaching that the soul of man, as also that of beasts, birds, other animals, and plants, is part of the light which was won by the demons from the First Man, while all bodies are of that matter which is the same as darkness. Man's body, we are told, is called a cosmos by parallelism with the great Cosmos, and all men have roots

<sup>1</sup> Hegemonius, *Acta*, c. xi., p. 18, Beeson.

<sup>2</sup> This is the tradition evidently known to the author of the *Mépos τευχῶν Σωτηρίου* when he makes Jesus say "When I spoke with Enoch out of the Tree of Knowledge in the Paradise of Adam." (See Chap. X, p. 173 *supra*.)

<sup>3</sup> Al Bîrûnî, *Chronology*, p. 190.

here below bound to things which are above<sup>1</sup>. It is the cutting of these roots by the demons which causes death. On the death of a man who has attained the knowledge of the truth during this life, his soul is taken up in the wheel to the Sun, by whom after it has been purified it is passed over to the Moon, the two luminaries being represented as ships or ferry-boats sailing to-and-fro in the upper air. When the Moon is full, she ferries the souls with which she is filled towards the East, and then delivers them to the Aeons of Light who place them in the Pillar of Glory before described. She then returns for a fresh supply greatly reduced in circumference, whereby her waxing and waning is explained<sup>2</sup>. In the case of a man who has not attained the knowledge of the truth, a small portion of the soul only is purified and is then reincarnated in the body of a dog, a camel, or some other animal, according to the sins which it has committed. Thus, if he has killed a mouse, he will become a mouse, if a chicken a chicken, and so on, while those who have been employed in the reaping of corn will themselves become corn or some other kind of plant in order that they may be reaped and cut in turn. The soul of the homicide will, it is said, go to inhabit the body of a leper<sup>3</sup>. There will, apparently, be five of these reincarnations<sup>4</sup>, and between them the soul which has not found knowledge of the truth is given over to the demons in order that they may subdue it in the "Gehennas" of fire. This, like its transference into other bodies, is for the sake of teaching it better; but if it still remains without knowledge,

<sup>1</sup> Hegemonius, *Acta*, c. ix., p. 14, Beeson. This idea of the macrocosm and microcosm according to which the body of man is a *replica* of the universe is found in nearly all later mysticism—also in the Cabala and in the later Zoroastrian treatises. In the Tun-huang treatise it forms the chief theme of the homiletic part of the work.

<sup>2</sup> *Op. cit.* c. viii., pp. 12, 13, Beeson. The Latin version has *vir* "man" for *aer* "air" in its description of the Column of Glory. Probably a clerical error.

<sup>3</sup> *Op. cit.* c. x., pp. 15, 16, Beeson. The word used is *κέλεφος*; but the Latin texts all read "elephant."

<sup>4</sup> Ἐρῶ.....πὼς μεταγίγεται ἡ ψυχὴ εἰς πέντε σώματα, *op. et cap. cit.* p. 15, Beeson.

it is cast into the great fire until the Consummation of the World<sup>1</sup>.

The Mahommedan tradition as to what occurs at death goes into more details, and it is here that we catch the first glimpse of that doctrine of predestination which plays so prominent a part in the later teaching of the Manichaean Church. When a just or perfect or "true" Manichaean is on the point of death, the First Man sends to him a "shining god of light" in the form of "the Wise Guide" accompanied by three other gods and with them "the bowl of water, the garment, the fillet for the head, the circlet and the crown of light<sup>2</sup>." With them comes the virgin who is like to the soul of the just one. There also appear to him the devil of greed, that of pleasure, and others with them. Directly the just one who is dying sees them, he calls to his help the goddess<sup>3</sup> who has taken the form of the Wise Guide and the three gods her companions. They draw near to him, and at the sight of them the devils turn and flee. Then the gods take the just one, do on him the crowns and the garment, put in his hand the bowl of water, and mount with him to the Column of Praises in the sphere of the Moon, to the First Man and to Nahnaha the Mother of Life, until they reach the place in the Paradise of Light he occupied in the beginning<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> The soul of the rich man is in the same chapter said to pass into the body of a beggar and thereafter *εἰς κόλασιν αἰώνιον* "to everlasting punishment." Is it from this source that the Calvinists took their doctrine of eternal damnation? The reprobation of the rich as such and without regard to the use they might make of their wealth perhaps accounts for the levelling and republican politics of the mediaeval sectaries.

<sup>2</sup> The Bowl of water reminds one of the cup of soberness and reflection administered to just souls by the little Sabaoth the Good in the *Μέρος τευχῶν Σωτήρος*. See Chap. X, p. 187 *supra*. The garment was probably the "heavenly nature" with which the soul had to be clothed before it could ascend to the upper spheres of light (cf. the *Pistis Sophia*). That the crown was designed as a protection against the spirits of evil, there are many indications in the last-mentioned document.

<sup>3</sup> Kessler would here read "gods" for "goddess."

<sup>4</sup> That is to say, the particular world of light, whether Gentleness, Knowledge, Intelligence, Discretion, or Discernment, from which the soul descended. As the "armour" of the First Man, from which the souls of men are formed, was made with the aid of these five worlds, it is reasonable

His body remains stretched (upon the earth) in order that the Sun, the Moon, and the Gods of Light may take from it its powers, i.e. the Water, the Fire, the gentle Breeze, which are then borne upwards to the Sun and become a god. The rest of the body, which is all darkness, is cast into hell<sup>1</sup>.

This description of the lot of the blessed after death is certainly taken from no other source than that from which the Zoroastrian books put forth by the Sassanian kings are drawn.

"At the end of the third night," says the *Hatoxt Nask*<sup>2</sup>, one of the earliest Zoroastrian documents that have come down to us, "at the dawn of day, the soul of the faithful thinks that it is in a garden and smells its perfumes. Towards it a wind seems to blow from the region of the South perfumed, more perfumed than any other wind. Then the soul of the faithful thinks that he breathes this wind with his nostrils. 'Whence blows this wind, the most perfumed that I have breathed with my nostrils?' While encountering this breeze, his religion (conscience, *daena*, spiritual life), appears to him in the form of a beautiful young girl, shining, with white arms, robust, of fair growth, of fair aspect, tall, high-bosomed, of fair body, noble, of shining race, with the figure of one who is 15 years old, as fair in form as the fairest creatures that exist. Then the soul of the faithful speaks to her, and asks 'What virgin art thou, thou the most beautiful in form of the virgins that I have ever seen?' Then she who is his religion answers: 'O youth of good mind, of good words, of good deeds, of good religion, I am thine own religion incarnate<sup>3</sup>.'"

So, too, the *Vendidad*, which may be a little later in date than the document just quoted, represents Ahura Mazda as saying in answer to Zarathustra himself:

to suppose that one or other predominates in the soul of everyone. Hence probably the degree in the Manichaean hierarchy to which any hearer might attain was thought to be decided for him before his birth, and governed his destination after death. Thus it is said in the *Pistis Sophia*: "Those who have received exalted mysteries shall be in exalted places, and those who have received humble mysteries in humble places in the light of my kingdom." Cf. Chavannes et Pelliot, *op. cit.* 1<sup>ère</sup> partie, p. 533, n. 1 and St Augustine as there quoted.

<sup>1</sup> The words given in the text are almost *verbatim* from *En Nadim*. See Kessler, *op. cit.* pp. 398-399; Flügel, *op. cit.* p. 100.

<sup>2</sup> One of the 21 *Nasks* of the Sassanian Avesta.

<sup>3</sup> Söderblom, *op. cit.* p. 83.

"After a man has disappeared, after a man dies, the impious and malevolent demons make their attack. When the dawn of the third night shines forth and the day begins to lighten, the well-armed Mithra arrives at the mountains giving forth holy radiance and the Sun rises. Then, O Spitama Zarathustra... she comes, the beautiful, the well-made, the strong, of fair growth, with her dogs, full of discernment, rich in children [*i.e.* fruitful], the longed-for, virtuous one. She leads the souls of the faithful above the Hara Berezaiti; she sustains them across the bridge Chinvat in the road of the spiritual divinities. Vohu Mano rises from his golden throne. Vohu Mano says, 'O faithful one, how hast thou come hither from the perishable world to the imperishable?' Rejoicing, the faithful pass before Ahura Mazda, before the beneficent Immortals, before golden thrones, before the house of hymns, the dwelling of Ahura Mazda, the dwelling of the beneficent Immortals, the dwelling of the other faithful ones. When the faithful is purified, the wicked and malevolent demons tremble by reason of the perfume after his departure as a sheep pursued by a wolf trembles at the [scent of the ?] wolf<sup>1</sup>."

To return, however, to the Mahommedan account of Manes' doctrine. This last by no means confined his survey of the state of man's soul after death to the single case of the justified dead.

"When death draws nigh to a man who has fought for religion and justice, [he is represented as saying,] and who has protected them by protecting the Just, the gods whom I have mentioned appear and the devils are there also. Then he calls the gods to his help and seeks to win them by showing to them his works of piety, and that which he has done to protect the religion and the Just. The gods deliver him from the devils, while leaving him in the condition of a man in this world, who sees fearful shapes in his dreams, and who is plunged in dirt and mud<sup>2</sup>. He remains in this state until his Light and his Spirit are freed [evidently by transmigration] when he arrives at the meeting-place of the Just. Then, after having wandered for long, he dons their vesture. But when death appears to the sinful man, to him who has been ruled by greed

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.* pp. 89 *seqq.*

<sup>2</sup> See the Orphic belief about the uninitiated being plunged in mud, Vol. I. chap. iv. p. 131 *supra*.

and desire, the devils draw near to him, they seize him, torment him, and put fearful shapes before his eyes. The gods are there also with the vesture, so that the sinful one thinks they have come to deliver him. But they have only appeared to him to reproach him, to remind him of his actions, and to convince him of his guilt in having neglected the support of the Just. He wanders unceasingly throughout the world, and is tortured until the coming of the End of the World, when he will be thrown into hell. Thus, Manes teaches," continues the tradition, "that there are three paths for the soul of man. One leads to Paradise, which is the path of the Just. Another leads back to the world and its terrors, which is the path of the protectors of the faith and the helpers of the Just. The third leads to hell, which is the path of the sinful man<sup>1</sup>."

Yet there is nothing to show that the sins which thus doom a man to hell are within his choice to commit or to leave alone as he chooses. Rather does it appear that his freedom from sin depends on the admixture of light which enters into his composition at his birth. Of all this the Christian tradition says nothing.

It is, nevertheless, in the division here set forth of the adherents of the religion into the Just and the protectors of the Just, that the great distinction between the Manichaean religion and all its contemporaries appears. Both traditions are agreed that those who listen to the teaching of Manes are to be divided into five classes, viz. the Masters who are the sons of Gentleness; those who are enlightened by the Sun, who are the sons of Knowledge or the Priests; the Elders who are the sons of Intelligence; the Just who are the sons of Discretion; and the Hearers who are the sons of Discernment<sup>2</sup>. The first three classes we may safely neglect for the present, as they evidently correspond to the three superior or directing orders of the Manichaean Church to which we shall have to return

<sup>1</sup> Kessler, *op. cit.* pp. 399-400; Flügel, pp. 100-101.

<sup>2</sup> This is, I think, the only construction to be put on the words of the *Acta*: τῆς δὲ ψυχῆς ἐστὶ τὰ ὀνόματα ταῦτα, νοῦς, ἔννοια, φρόνησις, ἐνθύμησις, λογισμός. Hegemonius, *Acta*, c. x., p. 15, Beeson. For the Mahommedan tradition, see En Nadīm in Flügel, *op. cit.* p. 95. The whole question of the organization of the Manichaean Church is elaborately discussed by Flügel in n. 225 on this passage, *op. cit.* pp. 293-299.



later; but the last two, the Just and the Hearers, give us the key to the organization of the sect, and explain how it was able to maintain itself for so long against its numerous enemies. He who would enter into the religion, says the Mahommedan tradition, must examine himself that he may see whether he is strong enough to conquer desire and greed, to abstain from meats, from wine, and from marriage, to avoid all that can be hurtful in (to?) water or fire, and to shun magic and hypocrisy<sup>1</sup>. These abstinences are those that are demanded of the perfect Manichaeans, who have been called above the Just or the Sons of Discretion, and who with their superiors constitute the Manichaean Church. These are they whom the Christian tradition speaks of as the Elect, and for whom, as we have seen, there is reserved after death a glorious ascension and an immediate return to the Paradise of Light. So Valentinus, like many other Gnostics, divided Christians into the two classes of pneumatics and psychics, the first-named of whom were to occupy a more distinguished position in the world to come than the other. There is nothing to show, however, that Valentinus or any other Gnostic ever imposed any discipline on the pneumatics than that prescribed for the psychics, or that he thought that those who were going to take a higher rank in the next world should observe a stricter mode of life in this. The Catholics, indeed, had already adopted the view that the celibate member of the Church possessed "a higher calling" than his married brethren; but there is no reason to suppose that they therefore assigned to them a higher place in the next world, or thought that those who had not the gift of continence were to be permitted any relaxation of the moral law imposed upon celibate and married alike. It is therefore probable that it was from Buddhism, with which Manes must have made himself well acquainted during his journeys into India, that he borrowed the scheme by which those who believed in the truth of his teaching could delay subjecting themselves to the austerities necessary for salvation until their next incarnation.

However this may be, there can be little doubt that this is the meaning of the position he assigned to the Hearers.

<sup>1</sup> Kessler, *op. cit.* p. 398; Flügel, *op. cit.* pp. 94, 95.

"If," he says according to the Mahommedan author, "he who would enter into the religion does *not* feel strong enough to practise the abstinences before enumerated, let him renounce the attempt. If, however, he is filled with love for the faith, yet cannot conquer desire and greed, let him seek to progress by protecting the faith and the Just, and let him fight against evil actions on the occasions when he can give himself to labour<sup>1</sup>, piety, vigilance, prayer and humility. This will fill him with contentment both in this ephemeral world, and in the eternal world to come, and he will put on the body of the second degree in the state which follows after death<sup>2</sup>."

Unless they are greatly belied, some of his later followers looked upon this as a licence to the Hearers to commit such sins as they chose<sup>3</sup> in this life, yet it is evident that this formed no part of Manes' original teaching. He imposed upon the Hearers, says the Mahommedan tradition, ten commandments, which were: to abstain from prayers offered to idols, from lying, from avarice, from murder, from adultery, from false teaching, from magic, from double dealing, from doubt in religion and from slackness and want of energy in action. They also had to recite certain prayers which will be mentioned in their place, and to fast two days when the Moon is new as when she is full, as also when the Sun enters the sign of Sagittary. A three days' fast was also obligatory on the first appearance of the Moon after the entry of the Sun into the signs of Capricorn and of Libra. But they were to feast on Sunday, a day which the Perfect, according to the Mahommedans, kept as a fast, their own weekly feast being held on Monday<sup>4</sup>.

The attitude of Manes to other religions was also without

<sup>1</sup> This is perhaps the first instance in antiquity of the Gospel of Work. That these virtues of the believer are made five in number, so as to accord with the five worlds of light, needs no demonstration.

<sup>2</sup> See passages from Kessler and Flügel quoted in n. 1, p. 313 *supra*.

<sup>3</sup> Rainerio Saccone, a Manichaean Perfect in Languedoc, who afterwards turned Inquisitor, said that he had often heard the Elect lamenting that they had not taken the opportunity of committing more sins before receiving the "Baptism of the Spirit" which was thought to wash them away. See H. C. Lea, *History of the Inquisition*, vol. I., p. 94.

<sup>4</sup> Flügel, *op. cit.* pp. 95-97. See, however, n. 4, p. 349 *infra*.

precedent or parallel. Of the Jews and of their religion he seems to have had a detestation so strong and so deeply rooted that it is difficult not to see in it some connection with political events of which we have lost the record. The war of extermination which Hadrian had been forced to wage against the Jews of Palestine must have been over nearly a century before Manes began to teach; but the Babylonian Jews can hardly have been affected by this, and the story of the king of Adiabene quoted above shows that shortly before the time of Ardeshr̄ they actively pursued the proselytizing policy which their countrymen in the West had been forced to abandon. In doing so, they doubtless contrived, after their manner, to offend the national prejudices of their hosts, while showing themselves greedy, as ever, of political power<sup>1</sup>. This probably provoked reprisals, and it is quite possible that Manes' teaching derived some of its strength from the revulsion felt by Ardeshr̄'s Aryan subjects to the borrowings from Judaism to be found both in Mithraism and the Avestic literature. But whatever its cause, there can be no doubt about the hatred felt by Manes for the Jewish religion, which is prominent in every tradition of his teaching. The earlier Gnostics, like Marcion, had made the God of the Old Testament a harsh but just and well-meaning tyrant; but Manes would have none of this, and declared that he was a fiend.

"It is the Prince of Darkness," the Christian tradition makes him say, "who spoke with Moses, the Jews, and their priests. Thus the Christians, the Jews, and the Pagans are involved in the same error when they worship this God. For he led them astray in the lusts that he taught them, since he was not the God of Truth.

<sup>1</sup> Josephus, *Antiquities*, Bk xx. cc. 2-4, breaks off his history at the critical point. The Book of Esther is, perhaps, sufficient proof of the capacity of the Oriental Jews for provoking periodical pogroms at least as freely as their co-religionists in modern Russia. Johnson (*Oriental Religions*), *Persia*, 1885, p. 410, quotes, apparently from Firdûsi, that the "old Persian nobles" were driven by Ardeshr̄'s reforms into Seistan, where they were the ancestors of the present Afghan clans. As some of these clans call themselves the Beni Israel, it is possible that the Jews rather than the nobles were expelled on this occasion, as happened before under Cyrus.

Whence those who put their hope in that God who spoke with Moses and the Prophets will be bound with him, because they have not put their trust in the God of Truth. For he, the God of the Jews, spoke with them according to their lusts<sup>1</sup>."

In a very different spirit, however, Manes dealt with all the other religions that he knew. He acknowledged the Divine origin of the teachings of Zoroaster, of Buddha, and of Jesus alike, with the reservation that he should himself be regarded as the Paraclete, which here seems to mean nothing more than the Legate or Ambassador, sent by the Good God to complete their teaching. "Mânî, the messenger of the God of Truth to Babylonia<sup>2</sup>" is the title which, as we have seen, he gives himself in the most authentic record of his teaching. He aimed, in short, at establishing a universal religion which should include within its scope the three faiths that between them commanded the allegiance of the whole civilized world, and should acknowledge him as its founder and chief. Had his plans come to fruition in his lifetime, he would have attained an empire over the minds of men far greater and wider than any ever claimed or dreamed of by the most ambitious of the Roman pontiffs.

The full details of the way in which he proposed to establish this new faith we shall probably never know; but discoveries made during the last decade have shown us that his plans were well fitted to their purpose. The successive expeditions of Drs Grünwedel and von Le Coq to Turfan have shown that up to as late as the xixth century A.D., there was still a strong body of Manichaeans probably belonging to the Ouigur nation in Chinese Turkestan, living apparently in complete amity with their Buddhist countrymen<sup>3</sup>. The writings that were there discovered, to which we shall have to refer more in detail later,

<sup>1</sup> Hegemonius, *Acta*, c. xii. pp. 20-21, Beeson; Ephraem Syrus in Kessler, *op. cit.* p. 302. For Mahommedan confirmation, see Schahrastâni in *op. cit.* p. 339.

<sup>2</sup> Al Birûnî, *Chronology*, p. 190.

<sup>3</sup> See Le Coq's *Short Account* in *J.R.A.S.* 1909, pp. 299-322. Another and more popularly written one by the same author appeared in the *Conférences au Musée Guimet*, Paris, 1910 (Bibl. de Vulgarisation, t. xxxv.).

are mostly written in a script resembling the Estranghelo or Syriac but with an alphabet peculiar to the Manichaean religious documents, and which cannot, one would think, have been adopted by those who used it for any other purpose than that of concealment<sup>1</sup>. Judging from this and the practice of the sect in Europe from the time of Diocletian onward, it seems highly probable that among Buddhists, the Manichaean hearers professed Buddhism, and among Zoroastrians, Zoroastrianism, hoping that thus they might be able to turn their fellows to their way of thinking without openly dissenting from the reigning religion. The persecution that Bahram I instituted against them immediately upon Manes' execution was perhaps less a reason than a pretext for this.

This is certainly borne out by their proceedings when they found themselves among Christians.

"You ask me if I believe the gospel," said the Manichaean Perfect, Faustus, in his dispute with St Augustine (himself for nine years before his conversion a Manichaean Hearer). "My obedience to its commands shows that I do. I should rather ask you if you believe it, since you give no proof of your belief. I have left my father, brother, wife and children and all else that the gospel requires; and you ask me if I believe the gospel. Perhaps you do not know what is called the gospel. The gospel is nothing else than the teaching and the precept of Christ. I have parted with all gold and silver. I have left off carrying money in my purse; content with food obtained from day to day; without anxiety for the morrow and without care as to how I shall be fed or wherewithal I shall be clothed; and you ask if I believe the gospel? You see in me the blessings of the gospel; and yet you ask if I believe the gospel. You see me poor, meek, a peacemaker, pure in heart, mourning, hungering, thirsting, bearing persecutions and hatred for righteousness' sake; and do you doubt if I believe in the gospel?<sup>2</sup>"

So, too, Manes in the epistle to Marcellus which, although much altered and corrupted by its Catholic transcribers, is probably a genuine document, is careful to begin in language which seems imitated from the Epistles of St Paul:

<sup>1</sup> The Marcionites, another much hated sect, also used a secret script.

<sup>2</sup> St Augustine, *contra Faustum*, Bk v. c. 1.

"Manes, an apostle of Jesus Christ, and all the saints who are with me, and the virgins, to Marcellus, my beloved son; Grace, mercy, and peace be with you from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ; and may the right hand of light preserve you from the present evil world and from its calamities, and from the snares of the wicked one, Amen<sup>1</sup>."

While in the Disputation which follows and which is certainly a later interpolation, or possibly a concoction of some later author, he is represented as saying "My brother, I am indeed a disciple of Christ, and, moreover, an apostle of Jesus." Yet in spite of this and a few other passages of the same kind, it is plain that neither Manes, nor any of those who believed on his teaching, were Christians in any sense in which the term could not be applied to the followers of Mahommed or many another professedly anti-Christian teacher. Manes entirely rejected the account of the Incarnation given in the Gospels, alleging, as a modern critic might do, that it was not the account of eyewitnesses, but a mass of fables which had grown up after the memory of the events recorded had faded away<sup>2</sup>. Jesus, he said, was not born of woman, but came forth from the Father or First Man, and descended from heaven in the form of a man about thirty years of age<sup>3</sup>. But the body in which He appeared was an illusion only and was no more that of a real man than the dove which descended upon Him at the baptism in Jordan was a real dove, and it was not true to say that He was put to death by the Romans and suffered on the cross<sup>4</sup>. So far from that being the case, he declared that Jesus, the mortal or suffering Jesus, was nothing but the universal soul diffused throughout Nature and thus tormented by its association with matter. Thus, he said, the Jesus *patibilis* may be said to be hanging from every tree<sup>5</sup>.

To say that such teaching was likely to alter in the course of a generation or two is merely to assert that it followed the

<sup>1</sup> Hegemonius, *Acta*, c. v., pp. 5, 6.

<sup>2</sup> Augustine, *contra Faust.* Bk VII. c. 1.

<sup>3</sup> *Op. cit.* Bk XXIII. c. 2; *ibid.* Bk XXXII. c. 7.

<sup>4</sup> *Op. cit.* Bk XXVI. cc. 6, 8; *ibid.* Bk XXIX. c. 1.

<sup>5</sup> *Op. cit.* Bk XX. c. 2.

course of evolution which can be traced in all religions, and it is possible that in what has been said in the last paragraph concerning Jesus, we have rather the opinions of the Manichaeans of the fourth century than those of Manes himself. Yet even in this we see exemplified the chameleon-like habit peculiar to the Manichaeans of modifying their tenets in outward appearance so as to make them coincide as nearly as possible with the views of those whom they wished to win over to them. Thus when the Catholic doctrine of the Trinity, the Three Persons and One God, began to take shape under the pressure of the Arian controversy, the Manichaeans were not long in matching it with a Trinity of their own<sup>1</sup>:

"We worship," said Faustus the Manichaean Perfect, "under the triple appellation of Almighty God, the Father and His Son Christ and the Holy Spirit. While these are one and the same, we believe also that the Father properly dwells in the highest or chief light, which Paul calls "light inaccessible," and the Son in the second or visible light. And as the Son is himself two-fold according to the apostle, who speaks of Christ as the power of God and the wisdom of God, so we believe that His power dwells in the Sun and His wisdom in the Moon<sup>2</sup>. We also believe that the Holy Spirit, the third majesty,

<sup>1</sup> Cumont, *Cosmog. Manich.* p. 15, points out that the Manichaeans had already figured to themselves their King of the Paradise of Light as existing in the three Persons of Father, Mother, and Son in the shape of the Light, the Mother of Life and the First Man. This Trinity corresponds in every particular with that worshipped in Asia Minor under the names of Zeus (or Hadad), Cybele, and Atys, at Eleusis as Dionysos, Demeter, and Iacchos, in Greek Egypt as Osiris, Isis, and Horus, and in Persia, according to M. Cumont, as Ormuzd, Spenta Armaiti, and Gayômort. Cf. Bousset, *Hauptprobleme*, pp. 333-337. That its origin can be traced, as the last-named author seems to think, to the Babylonian Triad, Ea, Damkina, and Marduk, is more doubtful. The Manichaeans really acknowledged, as they were never tired of affirming, only two gods, Light and Darkness, and considered all the lesser powers of Light, including man's soul, as formed from God's "substance." When, therefore, they spoke of trinities, tetrads, and so on, it was in all probability for the purpose of producing that show of outward conformity with other religions which was one of the most marked features of their system.

<sup>2</sup> This is a reversal of the position in the *Pistis Sophia*, where the female power or Virgin of Light is placed in the Sun and the male Iao in the Moon.

has His seat and His home in the whole circle of the atmosphere<sup>1</sup> By His influence and inpouring of the spirit, the Earth conceives and brings forth the suffering Jesus, who, as hanging from every tree, is the life and salvation of man<sup>2</sup>."

In like manner, while not denying them in terms, the Manichaeans attempted to refine away all the significance of the Crucifixion and the Atonement, by representing them as merely symbolical. In one Apocryphal book called the *Wanderings of the Apostles*, which seems to be of Manichaean origin, Jesus appears to St John, who is sunk in grief at the supposed sufferings of his Master, and tells him that His Crucifixion was a mere phantasmagoria or miracle-play performed to impress the plebeian crowd at Jerusalem. Then He vanishes and in His stead appears a cross of pure light, surrounded by a multitude of other forms representing the same shape and image. From this cross comes a Divine voice saying sweetly:

"The cross of light is, for your sakes, sometimes called the Word, sometimes Christ; sometimes the Door, sometimes the Way; sometimes the Bread, sometimes the Sun; sometimes the Resurrection, sometimes Jesus; sometimes the Father, sometimes the Spirit; sometimes the Life, sometimes the Truth; sometimes Faith and sometimes Grace<sup>3</sup>."

As will presently be seen, now that we have under our hands the writings of Manichaean communities domiciled in Persian and Chinese territory, we find in them similar compromises with the faiths of Zoroaster and Buddha.

Yet after the Mahommedan conquest of Asia, and in regions where they were free, as it would seem, from the pressure of their Zoroastrian and Christian competitors, the Manichaeans appear to have evolved a theology as formal and as detailed as any of the Gnostic systems which we have examined. This

<sup>1</sup> Compare the statement of Herodotus (Bk I. c. 131) that Zeus (or Ormuzd) in the opinion of the ancient Persians was the name of "the whole circle of air."

<sup>2</sup> Augustine, *contra Faust.* Bk XX. c. 2.

<sup>3</sup> This is to be found in Harduin's *Acta Consilii*. The quotation in the text is taken from Matter, *Hist. de Gnost.* t. III. p. 89, and Neander, *Ch. Hist.* II. p. 187.



is in the main set out by Theodore Bar Khôni, the Nestorian Bishop of Kashgar, in his *Book of Scholia* written in Syriac and Mandaean which has been in part translated by the scholarly care of M. Pognon, late Consul of France at Aleppo, and has lately been commentated by M. Cumont. M. Pognon at first identified Bar Khôni with the nephew of the Nestorian Patriarch Iwannis (Johannes or John), whose reign began in 893 A.D., and he quoted Assemani's *Bibliotheca Orientalis* in his support<sup>1</sup>. Later, however, he withdrew this, and put him a century earlier<sup>2</sup>. M. Cumont, on the other hand, thinks that Bar Khôni lived at the end of the viith century or the beginning of the viiith, and therefore before the Mahommedan invasion<sup>3</sup>. In any event, the *Scholia* describe a body of Manichaean doctrine considerably later in date than any of the Christian sources hitherto referred to, and probably formed in an atmosphere where the necessity for outward conformity to either the Zoroastrian or the Christian faith was a good deal less cogent than it was further west. Its agreement with the Mahommedan tradition drawn from above is also well marked, and it derives much support from the Manichaean MSS. lately recovered from the oasis of Turfan in Turkestan, and in that of Tun-huang in China. It is possible, although no proofs are yet forthcoming, that it was this Neo-Manichaeism, as it has been called, that inspired the Manichaean sectaries who were imported in the ixth and xth centuries into Bulgaria, whence their missionaries found their way later into Italy, France, and other countries of Southern Europe.

The system disclosed in these documents begins, as does nearly every Manichaean writing, with the assertion of the existence of two gods, that is to say, the God of Light and the God of Darkness. As the Kingdom of Darkness, whenever and wherever described, is the exact opposite and counterpart of

<sup>1</sup> Pognon, *op. cit.* p. 5; Assemani, *Bibl. Orient.* t. III. p. 198 *cit.*

<sup>2</sup> Cumont, *Cosmog. Manich.* p. 106. It seems probable that the Kashgar in question is the country in Chinese Turkestan still called by that name. M. Pelliot, however, will have none of this and insists that Bar Khôni's Kashgar was Al Wasit near Bagdad. For the controversy, see *J.R.A.S.* 1913, pp. 434 *sqq.*, 696 *sqq.* and 1914, pp. 421-427.

<sup>3</sup> Cumont, *Cosmog. Manich.* p. 1, n. 2, and authorities there quoted.

that of the Light, we shall not return to it again, but assume that in describing the one we are *mutatis mutandis* describing the other. The God of Light has one substance of which all the powers of light were made, but three forms or hypostases, called in the Greek Formula of abjuration "faces" or persons, which added to his own personality make a supreme tetrad. These three hypostases are his wisdom, power, and goodness, by which is probably meant that he operates in the lower powers through these qualities, while remaining himself remote in the "inaccessible light<sup>1</sup>." He possesses also five houses or dwellings, which are also called his worlds and even his members. Their names according to Bar Khôni are Intelligence, Knowledge, Thought, Reflexion, and Feeling<sup>2</sup>. These seem to be

<sup>1</sup> Ἀναθεματίζω πάντας οὓς ὁ Μάνης ἀνέπλασε θεοὺς, ἤτοι τὸν τετραπρόσωπον Πατέρα τοῦ Μεγέθους καὶ τὸν λεγόμενον Πρῶτον Ἀνθρώπον.....καὶ τὸν ὀνομαζόμενον Παρθένον τοῦ φωτὸς κ.τ.λ. "I anathematize all those whom Manes lyingly makes gods, to wit, the Father of Greatness in four Persons, and the so-called First Man... and the famous Virgin of Light," etc., Kessler, *op. cit.* p. 403. His quotation of the Formula is from the works of the Apostolic Fathers edited by Cotelierius in 1724 (Amsterdam). It seems to have been administered to converts from Manichaeism to Catholicism down to a very late date. See Beausobre, *Hist. du Manichéisme*, t. i. pp. 66-67.

<sup>2</sup> Pognon, *op. cit.* p. 184. Cumont, *Cosmog. Manich.* pp. 9, 10, would substitute Reason for Knowledge and Will for Feeling. The Greek names as given in the *Acta* (Hegemonius, *op. cit.* c. x. p. 15, Beeson) are νοῦς, ἐννοια, φρόνησις, ἐνθύμησις, λογισμός which the Latin translator makes into *mens, sensus, prudentia, intellectus, cogitatio*. The first of these may pass as correct, since Nous appears as the first emanation of the Highest God in all the systems which preceded that of Manes and from which he is likely to have copied. Of the rest, it can only be said that they are the translations by scribes of Syriac or Mandaite words which were ill calculated to express metaphysical abstractions, and that their copyists were seldom well acquainted with the etymology of any of the three languages. Hence they generally made use of what they thought were the corresponding expressions in the works of great heresiologists like Irenaeus and Hippolytus without troubling themselves much as to their appropriateness. In the passage from the *Acta* above quoted, the five qualities named are said to be the "names of the soul," which is explained by what is said later (*op. cit.* c. x. p. 17, Beeson) that "the air (ἀήρ) is the soul of men and beasts and birds and fish and creeping things." En Nadim (Kessler, *op. cit.* p. 387; Flügel, p. 86), as has been said on p. 291 *supra*, gives the "members of the air" as Gentleness, Knowledge, Intelli-

ranged in this order below the dwelling of the inaccessible light, so as to cut off all approach to it by a fivefold wall. On the attack of the powers of darkness before mentioned, the God of Light, called by Bar Khôni the Father of Greatness, that is to say, the Very Great or Greatest<sup>1</sup>, creates by his word the Mother of Life, who in her turn evokes the First Man as already described. Thus is constituted, if M. Cumont be right, the First Triad of Father, Mother, and Son<sup>2</sup>. From the Turfan documents, we know that the Father was called, in Turkestan at any rate, by the name of Azrua or Zervan, and the Son Khormizta or Ormuzd<sup>3</sup>. As for the appellation of the Mother we are still in ignorance<sup>4</sup>.

gence, Discretion and Discernment, which are the same as those which he has just attributed to the King of the Paradise of Light. St Augustine (*c. Faust.* Bk xx. c. 15) says in like manner that the Manichaeans thought their souls "members of God," which seems to refer to the same belief. Bar Khôni (Pognon, *op. cit.* p. 186), as has been said, not only assigns the five dwellings of Intelligence, Knowledge, Thought, Reflexion and Feeling to the Living Spirit, but makes him draw his five sons from them, and M. Cumont (*Cosmog. Manich.* p. 10, n. 3) quotes the *Acta Thomae* as saying that the Third Legate or Srôsh is "the Legate of the five members, Nous, Ennoia, Phronesis, Enthymesis and Logismos." From all which we may gather that the Supreme God of Light and his "Second" and "Third" creations were each alike thought to have the same five dwellings or hypostases consisting of abstract qualities, although the exact significance of the names given to them for the present escapes us.

<sup>1</sup> This is the usual Oriental and Semitic figure of speech which leads Arabs at the present day to nickname any European with a large beard "the Father of Hair," and makes the Sphinx of Ghizeh the "Father of Terrors." In the same way, the Mother of Life means doubtless the Very Great Life or Source of Life.

<sup>2</sup> Cumont, *Cosmog. Manich.* p. 15.

<sup>3</sup> See the *Khvastuanift*, pp. 335, 342 *infra*, and the Tun-huang treatise (Chavannes et Pelliot, *op. cit.* p. 513, and n. 1). Cf. also Müller, *Handschriften-Reste*, p. 102.

<sup>4</sup> She cannot possibly be the Virgin of Light, as in the *Acta* she is said to retire at the Ecpyrosis into the Moon-ship along with that personage. See Hegemonius, *op. cit.* c. XIII. p. 21, Beeson. The name "Virgin of Light" also appears in the Turfan texts as an epithet of Jesus, if the words are not wrongly translated. See Müller, *Handschriften-Reste*, pp. 75, 77. The name Nahnaha given her by En Nadim has been referred to in n. 2, p. 300 *supra*.

When the First Man or Ormuzd marched against his enemy, he also evoked five elements called sometimes his sons and sometimes his members. These are the Ether, the Wind, the Light, the Water, and the Fire before mentioned, which together compose the soul of the world, and hence of man, who is in every respect its image. When he was conquered by Satan and dragged down to the lowest pit of hell, he prayed, says Bar Khôni, seven times to the Vêry Great Father, and he in compassion created, again by his word, the Friend of the Lights<sup>1</sup>, who evoked the Great Ban<sup>2</sup>, who evoked the Living Spirit. Here we have the second triad or "second creation," of which, as has been said, only the last member takes any active part in what follows. As we have already seen, the Living Spirit speaks a word like a sharp sword, and the image of the First Man answers<sup>3</sup> and is drawn up out of hell. These two, the sword or Appellant and the image or Respondent, together mount towards the Mother of Life and the Living Spirit, and the Mother of Life "clothes" the Image—no doubt with a form or "nature,"—while the Living Spirit does the same with the compelling word<sup>4</sup>. Then they return to the earth of darkness where remains the soul of the First Man in the shape of his five sons.

<sup>1</sup> Probably Mithras, who is in the Vedas and elsewhere called "Mithra the Friend." Mithras is invoked under his own name in the Turfan texts (Müller, *Handschriften-Reste*, p. 77), but the fragment is too mutilated to be able to deduce from it his place in the pantheon.

<sup>2</sup> This name, to be found nowhere but in Bar Khôni, cannot be explained. Pognon says it may be written the Great Laban, which gets us no nearer to its meaning.

<sup>3</sup> The image is probably his body or substance, which is of the substance of the Very Great Father. So Satan is in the Coptic *Trattato gnostico* of Rossi quoted in n. 2, p. 300 *supra* described as the ἀρχητέλασμα, probably as being the very substance of darkness as the Very Great Father is of the Light.

<sup>4</sup> This is the conjecture of M. Cumont (*Cosmog. Manich.* pp. 24, 25). As he says in note 5 on the first-mentioned page, the passage as it stands is inconsistent. The Appellant and Respondent under the names of Kroshtag and Padwakhtag appear in the *Khuastuanift* and also in the Tun-huang treatise (pp. 521 *sqq.*) without the part they play in the world being immediately apparent. The former document, however (see p. 343

In the meantime, the Living Spirit has also given birth to five sons. He, like the Very Great Father of whom he is perhaps the reflexion, has five worlds named like those of his paradigm from which he draws certain other powers. From his Intelligence, says Bar Khôni, he produces The Ornament of Splendour, who is none other than the Splenditenens we have seen drawing the heavens after him; from his Reason, the Great King of Honour, who is described as sitting in the midst of the celestial armies; from his Thought, Adamas of the Light armed with shield and spear; from his Reflexion the King of Glory whose function is to set in motion the three wheels of the fire, the water, and the wind, which apparently raise to the upper spheres the portions of those elements still left below; and finally from his Feeling the great Omophorus or Atlas who bears the earths on his shoulders<sup>1</sup>. Immediately on evocation, three of these powers were set to work to kill and flay the rulers of darkness, and to carry their skins to the Mother of Life. She stretches out the skins to make the sky, thereby fashioning ten or eleven or even twelve heavens. She throws their bodies on to the Earth of Darkness, thereby forming eight earths<sup>2</sup>. Thus the soul or sons of the First Man are rescued from the Powers of Darkness, and the machinery of the redemption of the Light is set on foot.

There is, however, a third act to the drama. Again, the lesser Powers of Light, this time the Mother of Life, the First Man, and the Living Spirit, cry to the Very Great Father.

*infra*), speaks of them as being concerned in the purification of the Light. MM. Chavannes and Pelliot (*op. cit.* p. 521, n. 1) think it possible that they may represent the portions of the "armour" of the First Man which were not sullied by contact with matter, and compare them to the last two Amshaspands, Haurvetât and Ameretât. See also their *Traité Manichéen*, etc. 2<sup>me</sup> ptie, in the *Journal Asiatique*, xi série, t. i. (1913), p. 101. One might liken them to the Cautes and Cautopates appearing in the Mithraic monuments, as to which see Chapter XII, p. 246 *supra*.

<sup>1</sup> All these subordinate deities were known to St Augustine. Cf. *id.* c. *Forst.* Bk xv. c. 6.

<sup>2</sup> Evidently Manes accepted the dictum of Valentinus quoted above (Chap. IX, p. 104 *supra*), that with celestial powers it is always the female who gives the form.

Satan, or, as the Mahommedan tradition calls him, Hummâma, is still in existence, although his "sons," the Rulers of Darkness, the Hot Wind, the Smoke, and the others have been crucified or fixed in the firmament, and he is still actively working with his remaining powers against the Light. The Light-Powers feel themselves contaminated and oppressed by the contact, and perhaps even in some fear lest they should again have the worst in a renewal of the conflict. Again, the Very Great Father hears them and sends to their assistance a third creation, called this time simply the Messenger.

Who this Messenger is, is the main puzzle of the new documents. The author of the *Acta* knew something of him, for he speaks of a "Third Legate," who, when the world is burning in the great conflagration which will mark the redemption of the last particles of light, will be found in the Ship of the Moon with Jesus, the Mother of Life, the Virgin of Light and the twelve other powers to be presently mentioned<sup>1</sup>. M. Cumont, in his able analysis of Bar Khôni's system, thinks that this "Third Legate" resembles the Neryôsang of the Persians, who in the later Mazdean literature is made the

<sup>1</sup> Hegemonius, *Acta*, c. XIII, p. 21, Beeson. Αἱ δὲ προβολαὶ πᾶσαι, ὁ Ἰησοῦς ὁ ἐν τῷ μικρῷ πλοίῳ, καὶ ἡ μήτηρ τῆς ζωῆς, καὶ οἱ δώδεκα κυβερνήται, καὶ ἡ παρθένος τοῦ φωτὸς καὶ ὁ πρεσβύτερος ὁ τρίτος ὁ ἐν τῷ μεγάλῳ πλοίῳ, καὶ τὸ ζῶν πνεῦμα καὶ τὸ τείχος τοῦ μεγάλου πυρὸς καὶ τὸ τείχος τοῦ ἀνέμου, καὶ τοῦ ἀέρος, καὶ τοῦ ὕδατος, καὶ τοῦ ἔσωθεν πυρὸς τοῦ ζώντος πρὸς τὸν μικρὸν φωστήρα οἰκοῦσιν, ἄχρῃς ἂν τὸ πῦρ κατανέλωσιν τὸν κόσμον ὅλον· ἐν ποσοῖς ποτε ἔτεσιν, ὧν οὐκ ἔμαθον τὴν ποσότητα. "But all the emanations [i.e.], Jesus who is in the small ship, and the Mother of Life and the 12 pilots, and the Virgin of Light, and the Third Legate who is in the large ship, and the Living Spirit and the wall [it should be "guardian," as MM. Chavannes and Pelliot explain] of the great fire, and the guardian of the Ether, and of the air, and of the water, and of the inner living fire, abide near the lesser light until the fire has consumed the whole Cosmos. But for how many years I have not learned." The Latin version runs: *Prolationes autem omnes Jesus in modica navi, et mater vitae et duodecim gubernatores et virgo lucis et senior tertius. Unde et majori in navi vivens spiritus adhibetur, et murus ignis illius magni, et murus venti et aeris et aquae et interioris ignis vivi, quae omnia in luna habitabunt usquequo totum mundum ignis absumat; in quot autem annis numerum non didici:—*which appears to be nonsense. The number of years which Turbo, who is here speaking, had not learned, is said by En Nadīm to be 1468.

herald of Ormuzd, and has also features in common with Gayômort the First Man, and Mithras<sup>1</sup>. But it is plain from the Tun-huang treatise lately discovered, as well as from the fragments found at Turfan, that the Third Legate corresponds most closely to the Mazdean genius or divinity Sraôsha, the angel of Obedience<sup>2</sup>. Sraôsha is described in the Srôsh Yashts as the "Holy and Strong Srôsh," "the Incarnate Word, a mighty-speared and lordly god." He it is who is called the "fiend-smiter," who is said to watch over the world and to defend it from the demons, especially at night, to fight for the souls of the good after death, and, in the older Mazdean traditions, to judge the dead with Mithra and Rashnu as his assessors, like Rhadamanthos, Minos, and Eacus among the Greeks<sup>3</sup>. In the Turfan texts he is called the mighty, and in the Tun-huang treatise is likened to a judge, while in both sets of documents he has his proper appellation of Srôsh<sup>4</sup>.

This third creation was no more content than his two predecessors to enter upon the task allotted to him without further help. His first act upon arriving hither, according to Bar Khôni, was to evoke or call into existence twelve virgins

<sup>1</sup> Cumont, *Cosmog. Manich.* pp. 58 sqq. and Appendix I.

<sup>2</sup> Chavannes et Pelliot, *op. cit.* (1<sup>ère</sup> ptie), p. 522, and n. 1. For the part played by him in the Chinese treatise see *op. cit.* p. 536, and n. 2. He is called "Mighty Srôsh" in the Turfan texts (Müller, *Handschriften-Reste*, p. 75).

<sup>3</sup> J. Darmesteter, *The Zend Avesta*, part I. (S. B. E. vol. 4, pp. 87, 99) and part II. (S. B. E. vol. 23, pp. 159-167). All the passages in which he is referred to come from the Vendidad, but he is also mentioned in the Bundahish. See West, *Pahlavi Texts*, part I. (S. B. E. vol. 5, p. 128).

<sup>4</sup> See n. 2 *supra*. M. Cumont (*Cosmog. Manich.* p. 34) thinks that this Messenger was added to the two triads (of Father, Mother, and Son, and the Friend of the Lights, Great Ban, and Living Spirit, respectively) in order to make up "the sacred number of seven." But seven is a number singularly neglected by the Manichaeans, who paid the greatest reverence to five, and preferred to seven the three and the twelve. Nor do I think that there is any real parallel in Manichaeism to the Seven Amshaspands of Zoroastrianism. The actual word *amshaspand* is used in the Tun-huang treatise (Chavannes et Pelliot, *op. cit.* 1<sup>ère</sup> ptie, p. 544), but with an entirely different signification from that of archangel or divinity. It seems there to mean simply "element." Cf. Chavannes et Pelliot, *op. cit.* 2<sup>me</sup> partie, p. 101.

with their vestures, their crowns, and their guards. The Turfan texts give us the names of these powers, four of whom seem to be attributes of sovereignty, and eight of them virtues. Their names in the order of the new texts are respectively, Dominion, Wisdom, Victory, Persuasion, Purity, Truth, Faith, Patience, Uprightness, Goodness, Justice and Light, and they are probably the twelve "pilots" whom the *Acta* describe as being at the Ecpyrosis in the Moon-ship with their father, with Jesus, and with the other powers<sup>1</sup>. But there is much plausibility in M. Cumont's theory that this Third Legate or Srôsh is supposed until that event to inhabit the Sun, and that his 12 "daughters" are the signs of the Zodiac among whom he moves<sup>2</sup>. According to Bar Khôni, it is the same Legate who is ordered by the Great Ban to create a new earth and to set the whole celestial machinery—the Sun and Moon-ships and the three wheels of fire, air, and water—in motion<sup>3</sup>. Yet we hear nothing in any other document of any addition to the number of eight earths already created, and we can only therefore suppose that Bar Khoni's phrase refers to the gradual purification of this world of ours by Srôsh.

Bar Khôni also makes the appearance of this last Legate responsible for the appearance of man upon the earth, as to which he recites a story which seems at first sight to be an elaboration of the Gnostic and Manichæan tradition preserved by the Christians and mentioned above. The Legate, he makes

<sup>1</sup> I can find no parallel to these powers in any other system, save that of the *Pistis Sophia*, where appear twelve Saviours of the Treasure-house of Light, from whom the souls of the Twelve Apostles of Jesus were said to be drawn. If, therefore, they are not the signs of the Zodiac, they may be an invention of the Manichæans to accord with the *magistri* or highest order of their Church (see p. 330 *infra*).

<sup>2</sup> Cumont, *Cosmog. Manich.* p. 36.

<sup>3</sup> Pognon, *op. cit.* pp. 189, 190. He says it was the Messenger (or Srôsh) who ordered the Great Ban to create a new world. M. Kugener, however (Cumont, *Cosmog. Manich.* p. 37, n. 4), says that the passage can be read as in the text, and this avoids the improbability of the younger power or Third Legate giving orders to one of the "second creation." The three wheels, fire, water, and earth, may possibly have been conceived as surrounding the earth, as with the Ophites of the Diagram. Cf. Chap. VIII, n. 3, p. 74 *supra*.



Manes say, was of both sexes, and on his appearance in the Sun-ship, both the male and female rulers of Darkness became so filled with desire that they began to give up the light which they had taken from the sons of the First Man. With this was mingled their own sin, half of which fell into the sea and there gave birth to a horrible monster like the King of Darkness. This was conquered and slain by Adamas of the Light, but that which fell upon the land fructified as the five kinds of trees<sup>1</sup>. Moreover, the female demons, who were pregnant at the time, miscarried and their untimely births ate of the buds of the trees. Yet these females remembered the beauty of the Legate whom they had seen, and Asaqlun or Saclas<sup>2</sup>, son of the King of Darkness, persuaded them to give him their sons and daughters, in order that he might make from them an image of the Legate. This they did, when he ate the male children and his wife Namraël consumed the female. In consequence Namraël gave birth to a son and a daughter who were called Adam and Eve. Jesus was sent to Adam and found him sleeping a sleep of death, but awoke him, made him stand upright, and gave him to eat of the Tree of Life, while he separated him from his too seductive companion. This story is not confirmed by any of the new documents; and in the present state of our knowledge it is impossible to say whether it contains an old Asiatic tradition, of which the Biblical accounts of the protoplasts and of the Sons of God making love to the daughters of men are the only remnants which have till now come down to us, or whether—as is at least as likely—the whole story is a blend by the Manichaeans of Jewish, Mandaite, and Pagan legends. The main point in it for our consideration is its introduction of a Jesus who is certainly not the same as the

<sup>1</sup> I read this, perhaps wrongly, thus instead of Five Trees as does Pognon (*op. cit.* p. 191). The five kinds of trees are often referred to in the Tun-huang treatise and in the *Khuastuamift*.

<sup>2</sup> This Saclas, who appears many times in Greek heresiology with his wife Nebrod, called in the text Namraël (for references, see Cumont, *Cosmog. Manich.* p. 73, and notes 3, 4, and 5), was known to Hippolytus, who uses both names in his description of the tenets of the Peratae, a name which may be equivalent to that of the Medes. See Hipp. *Philosoph.* Bk v. c. 14, pp. 194, 195, Cruice.

Jesus *patibilis* whom St Augustine and the other Christian Fathers make Manes describe as born of the Living Spirit and the Earth, and as hanging on every tree. This other Jesus, who came to the earth in the time of Adam, is a fourth emissary or Saviour put forth by the second and third creations according to the *Fihrist* and called by Bar Khôni "Jesus the shining one." In the Turfan texts he is, as has been said, perhaps equated with the Virgin of Light, and in the Tun-huang treatise he is spoken of as "Jesus the Victorious<sup>1</sup>." Evidently he is conceived as one of the Burkhangs or Buddhas who fight against the Powers of Darkness, and the Jesus *patibilis* is but another name for the fragments of light or "armour" of the First Man left on this earth. The borrowing of the name revered among Christians is but one of the compromises by which the Manichaeans hoped to draw those of other faiths into their net.

A like plasticity is shown in the organization of the Manichaean Church. The first disciples of Manes, to whom he gave special commandments, were, according to Christian tradition, only seven in number, in which if anywhere in the system we may see a reflexion of the seven Amshaspands of the Avesta<sup>2</sup>. But later there seems to have been instituted a band of twelve Apostles in manifest imitation of the Apostles of Jesus, who perhaps corresponded to the Masters or highest degree that we have seen called the Sons of Gentleness. These were presided over by a Manichaean Pope who figured as the representative and Vicegerent of Manes himself. There were also seventy-two bishops answering to the seventy-two disciples of Christ, who are perhaps to be identified with the Sons of Knowledge. Then came the Presbyters or Sons of Intelligence whose functions were chiefly those of missionaries and who were perpetually, like Faustus, travelling for the propagation of the faith<sup>3</sup>. This seems

<sup>1</sup> Chavannes et Pelliot, *op. cit.* 1<sup>ère</sup> ptie, p. 566, and n. 3.

<sup>2</sup> Hegemonius, *Acta*, c. xl. p. 18, Beeson.

<sup>3</sup> Augustine, *de Haeresibus*, c. 46, p. 210, Oehler. See also Chavannes et Pelliot, *op. cit.* 1<sup>ère</sup> ptie, p. 569, and n. 2; p. 572, and nn. 2, 3; and p. 581, and n. 4. MM. Chavannes and Pelliot discuss the question of the organization of the Manichaean Church in the second part of their memoir. See *op. cit.* 2<sup>me</sup> ptie, pp. 193, 196 and n. 2. They also give a dissertation on

to have been the organization generally adopted for Christian countries, and we meet with it there up to a very late date. Yet there is no reason to suppose that it was necessarily copied by the Manichaeans of Central Asia or India, or that the Manichaeans always obeyed some central authority. What organization they did adopt outside Europe and Africa we shall probably have to wait to discover when more of the documents coming from Turkestan have been deciphered.

The extreme simplicity of the Manichaean ritual also made easy to them all such adaptations to the ways of their neighbours. Hating images with as much energy, perhaps, as Zoroaster himself, they had neither statues nor lights nor incense in their meeting-places, which must in the West have been as bare and as unadorned as a Scottish conventicle. The whole service seems to have consisted of hymns and prayers, in the first of which the mythology of the sect doubtless found expression, while the second mainly consisted of those praises of the Powers of Light, which praises were thought, as has been said, to have an actual and objective existence and thus to fulfil a considerable part in the scheme of redemption. Up to the present we have very few examples of the hymns. The *Hymn of the Soul*, of which Prof. Bevan has published an English translation, is probably Manichaean in origin<sup>1</sup>, and St Augustine tells of a "love song" in which the Father, meaning thereby probably Srôsh, the third legate<sup>2</sup>, is represented as presiding at a banquet crowned with flowers and bearing a sceptre, while twelve gods, three from each quarter of the globe, are grouped round him "clothed in flowers" singing praises and laying flowers at his feet. These are said to represent the seasons<sup>3</sup>; and we hear also of myths doubtless expressed in song describing

the common life of the Elect. It remains to be seen whether this was anything more than a copy of the monastic institutions of the Buddhists. For obvious reasons, such an organization was not adopted in lands where they had outwardly to conform to other religions.

<sup>1</sup> So Professor Harnack and Mr Conybeare in the *Encyc. Brit.* (xith ed.), vol. xvii. p. 576, s.v. Manichaeism.

<sup>2</sup> "*Beatus pater*" is the name given to the *Tertius legatus* by Evodius, *de recta fide, passim*.

<sup>3</sup> Augustine, c. *Faust.* Bk xv. c. 5.

the great angel Splenditenens, whose care is the portions of Light still imprisoned in matter and who is always bewailing their captivity<sup>1</sup>; and of his fellow angel Omophorus who, as has been said, bears the world on his shoulders like the classical Atlas<sup>2</sup>. Doubtless, too, some of these hymns described that last conflagration, which seems to have occupied so great a place in the speculations of the early Manichaeans, when the justified faithful, secure in the two great ships which sail about on the ocean of the upper air, shall behold the world in flames and the last portion of the imprisoned Light mounting in the Column of Praises, while Satan and his hosts are confined for ever in the gross and dark matter which is henceforth to be their portion<sup>3</sup>. Possibly the Turfan discoveries may yet recover for us some important fragments of this lost literature.

With regard to the prayers, we are a little better informed. "Free us by thy skill, for we suffer here oppression and torture and pollution, only that thou (the First Man?) mayest mourn unmolested in thy kingdom," is one of those which St Augustine has preserved for us<sup>4</sup>. So, too, the Mahomedan tradition has handed down a series of six doxologies or hymns of praise out of a total of twelve which seem to have been obligatory, perhaps on all Manichaeans, but certainly on the Perfect. The suppliant is, we are told, to stand upright, to wash in running water or something else, in which we may perhaps see either the origin or an imitation of the ceremonial ablutions of the Mussulman, then to turn towards the Great Light, to prostrate himself and to say:

"Blessed be our guide, the Paraclete, the Messenger of the

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.* Bk xx. c. 9.

<sup>2</sup> Cumont, *Cosmog. Manich.* App. 2, "L'Omophore." He shows that this belief in an angel who supports the world on his shoulders goes back to the Assyrian cylinder-seals, where is found a world-bearing divinity in exactly the same pose as that reproduced in the Mithraic bas-reliefs.

<sup>3</sup> One of the silk banners obtained by the German expedition seems to have depicted this scene. See A. von Le Coq, *Chotscho: Facsimile-Wiedergaben der Wichtigeren Funde der Ersten Kgl. Preuss. Expedition nach Turfan*, Berlin, 1913, Bd 1, p. 1 and Pl. iv. 6.

<sup>4</sup> Augustine, c. *Faust.* Bk xx. c. 17. Is the prayer addressed to the First Man or to Splenditenens, whom St Augustine represents as mourning over the pollution of the Light?

Light. Blessed be his angels, his guards, and highly praised his shining troops."

Then he is to rise and, prostrating himself again, to say:

"Thou highly-esteemed one, O thou shining Mânî our guide, thou the root of illumination, branch of uprightness, thou the great tree, thou who art the sovereign Remedy."

A third prostration, and the praise runs:

"I prostrate myself and praise with a pure heart and a sincere tongue, the Great God, the Father of the Lights and of their elements, the most highly praised, the glorified, thee and all thy Majesty and thy blessed worlds that thou hast called forth! To praise thee is to praise equally thy troops, thy justified ones, thy word, thy majesty, thy good pleasure. For thou art the God who is all Truth, all Life, and all Justice."

Then comes a fourth prostration and the sentence:

"I praise all the gods, all the shining angels, all the lights, and all the troops who are from the Great God, and I prostrate myself before them."

The speech after the fifth prostration is:

"I prostrate myself and I praise the great troops, and the shining gods who, with their Wisdom spread over the Darkness, pursue it and conquer it."

While the sixth, and last given in full, is simply:

"I prostrate myself and I praise the Father of Majesty, the eminent one, the shining one who has come forth from the two sciences<sup>1</sup>."

It seems fairly plain that these praises are addressed not so much to the "King of the Paradise of Light" or Highest God of Goodness as to the lesser Powers of Light. The recent expeditions of European scholars to Central Asia have succeeded in recovering for us almost in full the Confession-Prayer repeated

<sup>1</sup> The praises in the text are all given by En Nadîm. See Flügel, *op. cit.* p. 96. Are "the two sciences" the Living Spirit and his Intelligence or Reason? If so the "Father of Majesty" probably means the *Beatus Pater* of note 2, p. 331 *supra*.

ritually by the Manichaean Hearers or laymen which, besides confirming the Christian and Mahommedan accounts of Manes' teaching summarized above, shows a greater belief in the efficacy of repentance and the enforcement of a stricter morality upon all classes of Manichaeans than we should have imagined from the accounts of their adversaries<sup>1</sup>. We are fortunate in possessing more than one text of this Confession-Prayer, that found by the energy of our English emissary, Dr (now Sir Marc Aurel) Stein, in the "Cave of the Thousand Buddhas" at Tun-huang, proving almost identical with the one discovered in Turfan by the Russian Expedition and now in St Petersburg, while both can be checked and supplemented by fragments also found at Turfan by Profs. Grünwedel's and von Le Coq's expeditions to the same place and taken to Berlin<sup>2</sup>. The title and first few lines of this prayer have been lost, owing to the fact that the Chinese plan of writing on a continuous sheet of paper many yards in length, which was then rolled up with the last lines innermost, was adopted by its transcribers. All the specimens yet found are in Turkish, the Russian MS. being in the dialect called after the nation using it, Ouigour or Uighur, and like that found by Dr Stein and the Berlin fragments, in the Manichaean modification of the Estranghelo or Syriac script. The prayer or litany is in 15 sections or classes, the number having doubtless a mystical reference<sup>3</sup>, and is followed in the Russian and English examples by a recapitulation which is not without value. The version which follows is a compound

<sup>1</sup> The Mediaeval Inquisitors were in especial never tired of denouncing the immorality of the Manichaean Hearers. See H. C. Lea, *History of the Inquisition*, index.

<sup>2</sup> The original documents are described by Prof. A. von Le Coq in "Turkish Khuastuanift from Tun-huang," *J.R.A.S.* 1911, pp. 277-279.

<sup>3</sup> There are many allusions in Manichaean literature to three worlds of light, which seem to be (1) the light inaccessible, or heaven of God; (2) the light intelligible, *i.e.* that can be comprehended by the mind only, which is inhabited by the First Man; and (3) the perceptible light, of which the Sun and Moon are the rulers. See especially Chavannes et Pelliot, *op. cit.* 1<sup>re</sup> ptie, pp. 564 and 586, and 2<sup>me</sup> ptie, p. 102, n. 2. The Manichaeans' addiction to the number five needs no insistence. Fifteen, *i.e.*  $3 \times 5$ , is therefore a number which came naturally to them.

of all the three sources mentioned above, and has been here divided into three parts, although it is not so in the original, for convenience of commentary.

## KHUASTUANIFT.

Sect. I. "[The Son of ?] the God Khormuzta even the Fivefold God descended from the heavens with the purity of all the gods, to war against the Demon; he (the Fivefold God) battled against the Shimnus<sup>1</sup> of evil deeds, and against the five species of the Kingdom of the Demons. God and the Devil, Light and Darkness then intermingled. The youth of the Divine Khormuzta even the Fivefold God, and our souls, joined battle with Sin and the Demon-world and became ensnared and entangled with it. All the princes of the Demons came with the insatiable and shameless Demon of Envy and a hundred and forty myriads of demons banded together in evil intent, ignorance, and folly. He himself, the Born and Created (*i.e.* the Fivefold God or son of Khormuzta) forgot the eternal heaven of the Gods and became separated from the Gods of Light. Hence, O my God! if the Shimnu (Great Devil) of evil intent has led astray our thoughts and inclined us to devilish deeds.—If, becoming thereby foolish and without understanding, we have sinned and erred against the foundation and root of all bright spirits, even against the pure and bright Azrua the Lord<sup>2</sup>.—If thereby Light and Darkness, God and the Devil have intermingled...

here follows a lacuna of several pages which Prof. von Le Coq suggests was filled with "an explanation of the allegorical story of the combat" and its practical application.

"...If we have said...is its foundation and root.—If we have said if anyone animates a body it is God; or that if anyone kills, it is God.—If we have said Good and Evil have alike been created by God. If we have said it is He [God] who has created the eternal

<sup>1</sup> Shimnu seems to be the Buddhist word for "devil" Cf. Neander, *Ch. Hist.* vol. II. p. 181. Prof. von Le Coq (*J.R.A.S.* 1911, p. 300) says it is of Soghdian origin. Chavannes et Pelliot, *op. cit.* 1<sup>ère</sup> ptie, p. 523, n. 3, seek to show that it is the equivalent of Ahriman.

<sup>2</sup> On this word see p. 323 *supra*; cf. Chavannes et Pelliot, *op. cit.* 1<sup>ère</sup> ptie, p. 542, n. 2, which seems to summarize all that there is to be said about it, and p. 342 *infra*.

Gods. If we have said the Divine Khormuzta and the Shimnu (Great Devil) are brethren<sup>1</sup>. O my God, if in our sin we have spoken such awful blasphemies, having unwittingly become false to God. If we have thus committed this unpardonable sin. O my God, I N.N.<sup>2</sup> now repent. To cleanse myself from sin, I pray: *Manâstâr kîrzâ!* (My sin remit!)”

Sect. II. “When because of the God of the Sun and Moon and of the Gods enthroned in the two resplendent Palaces, the foundation and root of the light of all the Burkhan<sup>3</sup> of Earth and Water go to the heaven prepared for their assembly (foundation and root), the first gate they reach is the God of the Sun and Moon. In order to deliver the Fivefold God and to sever the Light from the Darkness he rolls along the lower part of the heavens in fulness and lights up the four corners of the earth. O my God, if in our sin we have unwittingly sinned against the God of the Sun and Moon, the Gods enthroned in the two resplendent Palaces. If, although calling him the True, Mighty, and Powerful God, we have not believed in him. If we have uttered many spoken blasphemies. If we have said the God of the Sun and Moon dies, and his rise and setting comes [?] not by [his own?] strength, and that should he [trust to his?] own strength, he will not rise [?]. If we have said, our own bodies were created before the Sun and Moon. To cleanse ourselves from this unwitting sin also, we pray: *Manâstâr kîrzâ* (Our sin remit).”

Sect. III. “Since, in defence of the Fivefold God, even the youth of the Divine Khormuzta, his five members, that is to say, First, the God of the Ether; Secondly, the God of the Wind; Thirdly, the God of the Light; Fourthly, the God of the Water; Fifthly, the God of the Fire, having battled against Sin and the

<sup>1</sup> This was of course the exact statement of Zervanism, which the *Khuastuanift* implicitly condemns. Cf. Mihr Nerses’ proclamation in 450 A.D. quoted on p. 285 *supra*.

<sup>2</sup> This was the name of the owner, which was *Raimast Parzind* in the Tun-huang text of Sir Marc Stein.

<sup>3</sup> This was the name given to the incarnate, as distinguished from the spiritual, messengers of the God of Light to man. Thus Zoroaster is always spoken of in Manichaean literature as a Burkhan, and doubtless the historical Buddha and Jesus were included in the same category. Cf. Chavannes et Pelliot, *op. cit.* 1<sup>ère</sup> ptie, p. 572, n. 2.



Demon-world were ensnared and entangled<sup>1</sup>, and have intermingled with the Darkness. Since they were unable to go to the heaven of God and are now upon the earth. Since the ten heavens above, the eight earths beneath, exist on account of the Fivefold God. Since of everything that is upon the earth the Fivefold God is the Majesty, the Radiance [?], the Likeness, the Body, the Soul, the Strength, the Light, the Foundation and the Root. O my God, if in our sin we have unwittingly offended against or caused grief to the Fivefold God by an evil and wicked mind. If we have allowed our fourteen members to gain domination over us. If by taking animated beings with our ten snake-headed fingers and our thirty-two teeth, we have fed upon them and have thus angered and grieved the Gods [?]<sup>2</sup>. If we have in any way sinned against the dry and wet earth, against the five kinds of animals, and against the five kinds of herbs and trees. O my God, to cleanse ourselves from sin, so pray we now: *Manâstâr hîrzâ!* (Our sin remit!)"

Sect. IV. "If we have unwittingly sinned against the divine Burkhan of the hosts (of the Messenger God<sup>3</sup>) and against the merit-attaining pure Elect. If although we have called them the true and divine Burkhan and the well-doing and pure Elect, we have not believed on them. If although we have uttered the word of God, we have through folly acted against it and not performed it [?]. If instead of spreading the decrees and commandments, we have impeded them. O my God, we now repent and to cleanse ourselves from sin, we pray: *Manâstâr hîrzâ!* (Our sin remit!)"

Sect. V. "If we have wandered into sin against the five kinds of animated beings, that is to say, First, against two-footed man; Secondly, against the four-footed animals; Thirdly, against the flying animals; Fourthly, against the animals in the water; Fifthly, against the animals upon earth which creep on their bellies. O my God, if in our sin against these five kinds of animated and moving

<sup>1</sup> Obviously the authors of the *Khuastuanift* knew nothing of the doctrine put forth by the Manichaeans in Christian lands that the First Man offered himself as a sacrifice to destroy the sons of Darkness. Cf. n. 2, p. 294 *supra*.

<sup>2</sup> Because by so doing the existence of the diabolic creation would be prolonged.

<sup>3</sup> The words "of the Messenger" [God] are not in Prof. von Le Coq's version.

beings from the great to the small, we have beaten and wounded, abused, and injured, and pained, or even put them to death. If thus we have become the tormentors of so many animated and moving beings. O my God, to cleanse ourselves from sin, so pray we now: *Manâstâr hîrzâ!* (Our sin remit!)”

It will be seen that in these first five sections or clauses of the Confession, we have a confirmation in all essential points of the version of the faith taught by Manes as it has been preserved for us by the Mahommedan authors quoted above. It is even possible that it was from this source that the author of the *Fihrist* and Al-Bîrûnî derived some of their information concerning the Manichaeans, and although it is impossible as yet to fix any date for the Confession except within very wide limits, it may be said that it is probably earlier than either of the Mahommedan writers. It is certainly earlier than 1035 A.D., the date at which the grotto at Tun-huang in which one of the copies was bricked up<sup>1</sup>. But it seems plain that it must have long before been used in the Manichaean worship from the fact that copies differing little, if at all, from each other have been found in two different scripts. As two of these are in the Turkish language, it seems likely that they were translated for proselytizing purposes into this from the earlier Syriac version shortly after the conquest of the Tou-kiue or Turks by the Ouigours, which some authors put as far back as the viith century A.D.<sup>2</sup> The tenets of the Manichaeans must have been well settled for this to be possible, and we have here, therefore, an account at first hand of Manichaean teaching at a date much earlier than the Mahommedan authors quoted above, and first reduced to writing between the earliest promulgation of Manes' own teaching and the Mahommedan conquest of Persia. It is, therefore, contemporary, or nearly so, with the period of activity

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Chavannes et Pelliot, *op. cit.* 1<sup>ère</sup> ptie, pp. 503, n. 1. On this being mentioned in a paper in the *J.R.A.S.* 1913, Dr F. Denison Ross said that he thought the date should be put 300 years later, *J. cit.* p. 81. He has since withdrawn this (*J.R.A.S.* 1913, pp. 434-436).

<sup>2</sup> See the luminous historical study by M. Henri Cordier, “Les Fouilles en Asie Centrale,” *Journal des Savants*, Paris, 1910, pp. 219 *sqq.*, especially pp. 249, 250.

of the Zoroastrianism revived by the Sassanides, and it is interesting to find how much nearer in appearance to the cosmology and theology of the Avesta are those of the *Khwas-tuanift* than is the Christianized form of Manichaeism introduced into Europe and Africa and combated by St Augustine. Khormuzta, the First Man, is certainly Ahura Mazda, Oromazes, or Ormuzd, while the Fivefold God here spoken of as the "youth" is clearly to be identified with his five sons or the armour left below on his defeat<sup>1</sup>. Hence it is probable that the Manichaeans in Upper Asia did not wish to appear as the worshippers of any other deities than those of the Persian nation<sup>2</sup>, although where Christianity was the religion of the State, they were willing to call these deities by other names<sup>3</sup>. Yet the dualism which is the real characteristic of the faith of Manes here as elsewhere admits of no compromise, and the sin against which the Section II is directed is plainly that Zervanist heresy which would make *Zervan akerene* or Boundless Time the author of all things, and Ormuzd and Ahriman alike his sons. The part played by the Sun and Moon in the redemption of the Light is here the same as that assigned to them in both the Christian and the Mahommedan accounts of Manes' own teaching, but nothing is here said of the wheel which appears in the former<sup>4</sup>. The Divine "Burkhans" mentioned in Section III are, as we shall see later, the Divine Messengers sent from time to time into the present world to assist in the redemption of the Light. The sinfulness of feeding upon, injuring, or even angering the lower animals is here much more strongly insisted upon than in the other documents and

<sup>1</sup> Chavannes et Pelliot, *op. cit.* 1<sup>ère</sup> ptie, p. 513, n. 1. Müller, *Handschriften-Reste*, pp. 20, 22. Von Le Coq, *J.R.A.S.* 1911, p. 301.

<sup>2</sup> Ormuzd, "the whole circuit of the sky," although he calls him, *more Graecorum*, Zeus, "the sun and moon, the earth, fire, water and the winds," were "the only gods whose worship had come down to the Persians from ancient times" in the days of Herodotus. Cf. Herodotus, Bk I. c. 131.

<sup>3</sup> Faustus (Aug. *v. Faust.* Bk II. c. 4) distinctly says "Jesus Christ is the son of the First Man." Cf. also c. 5.

<sup>4</sup> It is very doubtful whether it is referred to or not in the Tun-huang treatise. Cf. Chavannes et Pelliot, *op. cit.* 1<sup>ère</sup> ptie, pp. 515, n. 2, and p. 516, n. 3.

demands repentance even in the case of the Hearers, and this points directly to a closer connection with Buddhism than hitherto has been thought possible. It is plainly opposed to the later Zoroastrian teaching, which makes the killing of certain animals belonging to the creation of Ahriman a religious duty; and may therefore have only been adopted by the Manichaeans when they found themselves in contact with a large community of professed Buddhists.

The next five sections of the *Khuastuamift* run thus:

Sect. VI. "If, O my God, we have wandered into sin, and have committed the ten kinds of sin in thoughts, words, and deeds. If we have made up fraudulent lies; if we have sworn false oaths; if we have borne false witness; if we have treated as guilty guiltless men; if by fetching and carrying tales we have set men at variance, and thereby have perverted their minds; if we have practised magic; if we have killed many animated and moving beings; if we have given way to wanton pleasures; if we have wasted the hard-earned gains of industrious men; if we have sinned against the God of the Sun and Moon<sup>1</sup>. If in our past and present lives since we have become Manichaeans [*i.e.* Hearers] we have sinned and gone astray, thereby bringing confusion and discord upon so many animated beings, O my God, to cleanse ourselves from sin, so pray we now, *Manâstâr hîrzâ!* (Our sin remit!)"

Sect. VII. "Who is he who wandering in sin comes to the entry of the two poison-laden ways, and to the road which leads astray to the Gate of Hell? The first is he who holds to false doctrines; the second is he who invokes the Demon as God and falls down before him. O my God, if wandering in sin, we have failed to recognize and understand the true God and his pure faith, and have not believed what the Burkhan and the pure Elect have preached<sup>2</sup>, and have instead believed on those who preach falsely, saying 'I preach the true God, and I expound the faith rightly.' If we have accepted the words of such a one and have unwittingly kept wrongful fasts, and have unwittingly bowed ourselves wrongfully, and wrongfully

<sup>1</sup> The Power whom Faustus (Aug. c. *Faust.* Bk xx. c. 2) calls "God the Son."

<sup>2</sup> Evidently the incarnate or human messengers, Zoroaster, Buddha, Jesus, and Manes. The heavenly "legates" are never depicted as "preaching" to men.

given alms; or if we have said 'We will acquire merit' and thereby have unwittingly committed evil deeds; or if, invoking the Demon and the Fiend as God, we have sacrificed to them animated and moving beings; or if, saying, 'this is the precept of the Burkhan,' we have put ourselves under a false law and have bowed ourselves, blessing it. If, thus sinning against God, we have prayed to the Demon. O my God, to cleanse ourselves from sin, so pray we now: *Manâstâr hîrzâ!* (Our sin remit!)"

Sect. VIII. "When we came to the knowledge of the true God and the pure Law, we knew the Two Principles and the Law of the Three Ages<sup>1</sup>. The Light Principle we knew to be the Paradise of God and the Dark Principle to be the Land of Hell. We knew what existed before Heaven and Earth, the Earth of God, was. We knew how God and the Demon fought with one another, and how Light and Darkness became mingled together, and how Heaven and Earth were created. We knew how the Earth of the Rulers and its Heaven will disappear, and how the Light will be freed from the Darkness, and what will then happen to all things. We believed in and put our faith in the God Azrua, in the God of the Sun and Moon, in the Mighty God<sup>2</sup>, and in the Burkhans, and thus we became Hearers. Four bright seals have we carved upon our hearts. One is Love which is the seal of the God Azrua<sup>3</sup>; the second is Faith, which is the seal of the God of the Sun and Moon; the third is the Fear of God which is the seal of the Fivefold God; and the fourth is the wise Wisdom, which is the seal of the Burkhans. If, O my God, we have turned away our spirits and minds from these four (categories of) Gods; if we have spurned them from their rightful place, and the Divine Seals have thus been broken, O my God, to cleanse ourselves from sin, so pray we now: *Manâstâr hîrzâ!* (Our sin remit!)"

Sect. IX. "In the Ten Commandments, we have been ordered to keep three with the mouth, three with the heart, three with the hand, and one with the whole self. If, O my God, we have wittingly or unwittingly by cleaving to the love of the body, or by listening

<sup>1</sup> The Past, Present and Future, called the "Three Moments" in the Tun-huang treatise. See Chavannes et Pelliot, *op. cit.* 11<sup>me</sup> ptie, pp. 114, 116.

<sup>2</sup> Probably the strong or mighty Srôsh or *Tertius Legatus*.

<sup>3</sup> This may be compared to the Ophite Diagram in which Agape or Love is made the summit of the Pantheon. See Chap. VIII p. 68 *supra*. See also the same dogma in Valentinus, Chap. IX p. 123 *supra*.

to the words of wicked companions and friends, of associates and fellows; or by reason of our having much cattle and other possessions; or by our foolish attachment to the things of this world, we have broken these ten commandments, and have been found wanting and of no avail: O my God, to cleanse ourselves from sin, so pray we now: *Manâstâr hîrzâ!* (Our sin remit!)”

Sect. X. “We have been ordered to render every day, with a whole mind and a pure heart, four praises to the God Azrua, to the God of the Sun and Moon, to the Mighty God, and to the Burkhans. If from lack of the fear of God or from slackness our praises have been offered unseemly, or if in offering them we have not turned our hearts and minds towards God, so that our praises and prayers have not reached God in pure wise, but have remained in another place: O my God, to cleanse ourselves from sin, so pray we now: *Manâstâr hîrzâ!* (Our sin remit!)”

This second part of the Confession, perhaps, deals with errors of conduct as the first does with errors of belief. The ten sins given in the VIth Section do not agree exactly with the list given in the *Fihrist* which says that the Manichaean Hearers were enjoined to abstain from prayers offered to idols, from lying, from greed, from murder, adultery, theft, from false teaching, from magic, from doubt in religion, and from slackness in action<sup>1</sup>; but perhaps all these prohibitions could be read into the list in the *Khuastuanift*. The VIIth Section seems to be directed not so much against other religions as against schisms within the Manichaean Church<sup>2</sup>, and it is evident that its authors knew of bloody sacrifices offered to the Powers of Darkness as described by Plutarch apart from the magic or sorcery condemned in the preceding section. In the VIIIth Section, we have also for the second time a new name for God in the word Azrua, which Prof. von Le Coq leaves unexplained; but which M. Gauthiot considers to be the same as, or rather the equivalent in Soghdian of Zervan<sup>3</sup>. Zervan, however, can hardly be here the Supreme God worshipped by Yezdegerd, especially as the *Khuastuanift* has just, as we have

<sup>1</sup> Flügel, *op. cit.* pp. 95, 96.

<sup>2</sup> As to these, see En Nadîm in Flügel, *op. cit.* pp. 97–100.

<sup>3</sup> Chavannes et Pelliot, *op. cit.* 1<sup>ère</sup> ptie, p. 543, n. 2.

seen, formally condemned as blasphemers those who say that Ormuzd and Ahriman are brethren, and therefore by implication those who give both Powers Zervan for a father. It seems more likely that the name is either a corruption of Ahura Mazda or perhaps of the Sanskrit Asura; but in any event, there can be no doubt that it denotes the King of the Paradise of Light, as the Highest Good God is called in the *Fikrist*. The division of the Ten Commandments of Manes into three of the mouth, three of the hand, three of the heart, and one of the whole being recalls St Augustine's description of the three eals, the *signaculum oris*, *signaculum manus*, and *signaculum sinus*, observed by the Manichaeans<sup>1</sup>; while the description in Section X of the four praises (or hymns) to be rendered daily bears out what is said above as to the praises of man being of importance for the actual redemption of the Light.

The remaining sections of the *Khuastuanift* are:

Sect. XI. "We have been ordered to give reverently seven kinds of alms for the sake of the pure Law. It has also been ordered that when the angels of the Light of the Five Gods and the two Appellant and Respondent Gods bring to us the Light of the Five Gods which is to go to the Gods to be purified, we should in all things order ourselves [or, "dress ourselves," according to Le Coq] according to the Law. If, through necessity or because of our foolishness, we have not given the seven kinds of alms according to the Law, but have bound the Light of the Five Gods, which should go to the Gods to be purified, in our houses and dwellings, or if we should have given it to evil men or to evil animals, and have thereby wasted it and sent it to the Land of Evil, O my God, to cleanse ourselves from sin, so pray we now: *Manâstâr kêrzâ!* (Our sin remit!)"

Sect. XII. "We have been ordered to keep every year 50 days of *Vusanti*<sup>2</sup> after the manner of the pure Elect, and thereon [?] to

<sup>1</sup> Augustine, *de Moribus Manichaeorum*, c. x. Cf. Baur, *Die Manichäische Religionssystem*, pp. 248 sqq. Chavannes et Pelliot, *op. cit.* 1<sup>ère</sup> ptie, p. 547, n. 1, examine the question whether these are borrowed from Buddhism as F. W. K. Müller and Cumont assert, and incline to the view that Manes took them from Zoroastrianism.

<sup>2</sup> The word *vusanti* does not seem to be explained by Prof. von Le Coq. Has it any connection with the Sanskrit *vasanta* "spring"? In that case,

please God by observing pure fasts. If, by reason of the care of our houses and dwellings or of our cattle and other possessions; or by reason of our need and poverty [foolish attachments, *apud* Le Coq]; or because of the greedy and shameless Demon of Envy; or of our irreverent hearts, we have broken the fast, either wittingly or by foolishness; or having begun it have not fasted according to the Rite and the Law. O my God, to cleanse ourselves from sin, so pray we now: *Manâstâr hîrzâ!* (Our sin remit!)”

Sect. XIII. “We have been ordered to pray every Full Moon [literally, every day of the Moon-God], to acknowledge before God, the Law, and the pure Elect, our sins and transgressions in prayer for the cleansing of ourselves from sin. If now wittingly, or by feebleness of mind, or from idleness of body, or because our minds were set on the cares and business of this world, we have not thus gone to prayer for the cleansing of ourselves from sin. O my God, to cleanse ourselves from sin, so pray we now: *Manâstâr hîrzâ!* (Our sin remit!)”

Sect. XIV. “We have been ordered to keep each year seven *Yimki*<sup>1</sup> [Days of Atonement?] and one month’s rigid fast [?]. We have also been ordered when meeting together in the House of Prayer to keep the *Yimki* and to observe the fast, to acknowledge in prayer with a whole mind to the Divine Burkhan the sins which we have committed during the year and which we know through our senses. O my God, if we have not kept the *Yimki* seemly; if we have not observed the month’s rigid fast perfectly and seemly; if we have failed to acknowledge in prayer the sins of the year which we know through our senses, and have thus failed in so many of our duties.

the 50 days fast may have been continuous like the Christian Lent and the Mahomedan Ramadan. But it seems more likely that it refers to the weekly fast on Sunday which, the *Fihrist* notwithstanding, seems to have been incumbent on all the Manichaeans, Elect and Hearers alike. So Chavannes et Pelliot, *op. cit.* 2<sup>me</sup> ptie, p. 111, n. 2. See n. 4, p. 349 *infra*.

<sup>1</sup> Prof. von Le Coq says (*J.R.A.S.* 1911, p. 307) that this word is as yet unexplained and may belong to another language than Turkish. One is almost tempted to see in it a corruption of the Yom Kippur or Day of Atonement of the Jews. Judaism is the last religion from which the Manichaeans would have consciously borrowed; but the Jews have always taken their goods where they found them, and it may well be that both Jews and Manichaeans were here drawing from a common source.



O my God, to cleanse ourselves from sin, so pray we now: *Manâstâr hîrzâ!* (Our sins remit!)”

Sect. XV. “How many evil thoughts do we not think every day! How many deceitful and unseemly words do we not speak! How many unseemly deeds do we not do! Thus do we prepare torments for ourselves by crimes and frauds. Since we have walked body and soul in the love of the greedy and shameless Demon of Envy, and the Light of the Five Gods which we absorb in our food every day thereby goes to the Land of Evil. Wherefore, O my God, to cleanse ourselves from sin, so pray we now: *Manâstâr hîrzâ!* (Our sins remit!)”

Here follows a lacuna of four lines, after which the Confession resumes:

“O my God. We are full of defects and sins! We are thine adversaries and grieve thee by thoughts, words and deeds, for the sake of the greedy and shameless Demon of Envy. Gazing with our eyes, hearing with our ears, seizing with our hands, and trampling with our feet, we ever torture and impede the Light of the Five Gods, the dry and wet earth, the five kinds of animals, and the five kinds of plants and trees. So full are we of defects and sins! On account of the Ten Commandments, the seven kinds of Alms, the three seals, we are called Hearers; yet we cannot perform what these claim of us. If, wandering in sin, we have sinned against the Gods of Light, against the pure Law, against the Herald God<sup>1</sup> and the Preacher, the Men of God [the Preachers, according to Le Coq], against the pure Elect. If we have not walked according to the letter and spirit of the spoken words of God. If we have grieved the hearts of the Gods. If we have been unable to keep the Days of Atonement, the rigid fast, to offer the Praises and the Blessings according to the Law and the Rite. If we have been found lacking and unprofitable, and have day by day and month by month committed sins and trespasses—to the Gods of Light, to the Majesty of the Law, to the pure Elect, to cleanse ourselves from sin, so pray we now: *Manâstâr hîrzâ!* (Our sin remit!)”

These last five sections of the *Khuastuanift* give us a glimpse of the religious observances of the Manichaeans which alters somewhat the picture of them which we should have formed from

<sup>1</sup> Is this the *Tertius Legatus* or another?

the account of St Augustine and other Christian writers. The seven kinds of alms referred to in Section XI, are not, as might be thought, the gifts to necessitous or helpless persons prescribed alike by the Christian and the Mahomedan religions. It is apparent both from the context and from other sources of information that they are the offerings of food made by the lay or lowest members of the Manichaean community to the Elect or Perfect, who are spoken of in the subsequent sections as being already a species of Gods. This practice was certainly known to St Augustine, and was not likely to sink into oblivion in a community in contact with Buddhists, among whom monks living upon food given in alms by the faithful were a common sight. But the reason assigned by St Augustine for the practice, which was before obscure, here receives full explanation. The particles of light diffused through matter, and therefore inhabiting the bodies of animals and plants, could only, in Manichaean opinion, be set free by passing into the bodies of the semi-divine Elect. Thus says St Augustine in his treatise against the Manichaean Perfect, Faustus<sup>1</sup>:

“This foolish notion of making your disciples bring you food, that your teeth and stomach may be the means of relieving Christ who is bound up in it, is a consequence of your profane fancies. You declare that Christ is liberated in this way—not, however, entirely; for you hold that some tiny particles of no value still remain in the excrement, to be mixed up and compounded again in various material forms, and to be released and purified at any rate by the fire in which the world will be burned up, if not before.”

With the substitution of the “Light of the Fivefold God” for Christ—the use of this last name being probably either the gloss of St Augustine himself, or else the concession made by the Manichaean missionaries after their manner to the religious prepossessions of those among whom they hoped to gain converts—we have here the doctrine more plainly stated in the *Khuastuamift*. The Hearers are to labour perpetually, idleness being one of the Manichaean deadly sins, and to present

<sup>1</sup> Augustine, c. *Faust.* Bk II. c. 5. Cf. Chavannes et Pelliot, *op. cit.* 1<sup>ère</sup> ptie, p. 539, and n. 1.

the fruits of their labour in the shape of food to the Perfect. Not only will the particles of Light imprisoned in this last thus be conveyed to the Land of the Gods; but it will be prevented from going to the Land of Evil, which it would do if it were consumed by the bodies of the Hearers or, *a fortiori*, of those profane persons who belonged to other faiths than the Manichaeon. Thus is explained the inhumanity of which many writers accuse the Manichaeon community, which led them to refuse food to their neighbours in time of famine, alleging that all that they produced must be reserved for those of the Faith<sup>1</sup>.

This explains also the merit assigned to the observance of the many fasts enjoined in the concluding sections of the *Khuastuanift*. The fifty *Vusanti* fasts together with the month's rigid fast to be kept by the Hearers would all have the effect of diminishing their consumption of food in the shape of animals and plants, which hinders the liberation of the particles of Light imprisoned therein. In the choice of the days set apart for these fasts we see another instance of the Manichaeon practice as assimilating the outward observances of other religions. The fifty *Vusanti* fasts would give an average of very nearly one a week, and were probably kept on Sunday, the distinction between the Elect and the Hearers in this respect noted by the Mahommedan writer being probably due to some misconception. The month's rigid fast possibly accorded with the Arab Ramadan and must have been very useful in preventing the Hearers from appearing singular when among Mahommedans; and the seven *Yimki* or Days of Atonement seem to have been copied from the observances of the Jews. So possibly was the ritual practice alluded to in the XIVth section of meeting together at certain times to confess their sins, and as this is here said to take place in the House of Prayer, it entirely disposes of the theory set up by earlier writers that the Manichaeans had no temples, synagogues, or churches of their own<sup>2</sup>. The confession and prayer enjoined in Section XIII were doubtless to be repeated privately and in whatever place the

<sup>1</sup> Chavannes et Pelliot, *op. cit.* 1<sup>ère</sup> ptie, p. 573, n. 3.

<sup>2</sup> So Baur, *op. cit.* This was doubtless true in the West and in lands where they were exposed to severe persecution.

Hearer found himself at the fortnightly periods there specified, and this Litany was very probably the *Khuastuanift* itself<sup>1</sup>.

What other ritual was performed in these Manichaean meeting-places is still doubtful. The Christian writers declare that the Manichaeans celebrated a sacrament resembling the Eucharist with the horrible accompaniments before alluded to in the case of the followers of Simon Magus<sup>2</sup>. The same accusation was made, as has been many times said above, by nearly all the sects of the period against each other, and we have no means of determining its truth. It is however fairly certain from the silence observed on the subject by the *Khuastuanift* that no sacramental feast of any kind was either celebrated by or in the presence of the Hearers or general body of Manichaeans. If the Perfect or Elect partook of any such meal among themselves, it possibly consisted of bread and water only and was probably a survival of some custom traditional in Western Asia of which we have already seen the traces in the Mysteries of Mithras<sup>3</sup>. The pronounced Docetism which led the Manichaeans to regard the body of the historical Jesus as a phantom shows that they could not have attributed to this meal any sacramental efficacy like that involved in the doctrines either of the Real Presence or of the Atonement.

The case is different with regard to pictures. The Manichaeans forbade the use of statues or probably of any representations of the higher spiritual powers, no doubt in recollection of the idea current among the Persians even in Herodotus' time,

<sup>1</sup> This explains its translation from its original Pahlavi into the language of the converts and each copy bearing the name of the owner.

<sup>2</sup> See Cumont, *Cosmog. Manich.* p. 56, for authorities. Cf. also de Stoop, *op. cit.* p. 22. As has been many times said above, every religion and sect at the time accused the others of these filthy practices, without our being able to discern any proof of the justice of the accusation in one case more than in another. In any case, St Augustine, here the chief authority, could not have known of it at first hand, as he had never been more than a Hearer, and he himself says (*contra Fortunatum*, Bk I. App.) that while he had heard that the Elect celebrated the Eucharist, he knew nothing of the mode of celebration. Cf. Neander, *Ch. Hist.* II. p. 193.

<sup>3</sup> All contemporary authorities are agreed that they were forbidden to drink wine.

that the gods had not the nature of men. Yet the Jewish and later the Mahommedan prohibition against making likenesses of anything had evidently no weight with them, and even before the recent discoveries there was a tradition that Manes himself was in the habit of using symbolical pictures called Ertenki-Mani as a means of propaganda<sup>1</sup>. The truth of this is now amply confirmed by the German discoveries at Turfan, where Prof. von Le Coq found frescoes representing possibly Manes himself, together with paintings on silk showing the souls of the faithful dead in the Moon-ship<sup>2</sup>. Sir Marc Stein seems to have secured similar relics at Tun-huang, and when these are more thoroughly examined it is possible that they may throw light upon many points of Manichaeism yet obscure to us. The fact that the Manichaeism meeting-houses were decorated with symbolical pictures seems thereby already established.

Of their fasts, the principal ones have been already indicated in the *Khuastuanift*, and their feasts seem to have been few, almost the only one of which any mention has come down to us being that which was called the Festival of the Bema or pulpit, when an empty chair on five steps was placed in a conspicuous position in the meeting-house and adored by all present. This was said to have been done in commemoration of Manes as their founder and on the date preserved as the anniversary of his death<sup>3</sup>. If it be really true that any Manichaeans whether Hearers or otherwise kept Sunday as a holiday, it must have been, as Neander suggests, not because it was the day of the Resurrection, in which their Docetic doctrines prevented them from believing, but as the day of the Sun. In like manner they probably observed Christmas as the birthday not of Jesus, but of the Sun-god in accordance with the traditions preserved by the worshippers of Mithras<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Neander, *op. cit.* II. p. 170.

<sup>2</sup> Le Coq, *Chotscho*, Vol. I. Pl. I. and IV.

<sup>3</sup> Aug. c. *Ep. Fundamenti*, c. 8.

<sup>4</sup> Augustine, c. *Faust.* Bk XVIII. c. 5, whom he quotes, does not say however that they kept Sunday as a festival, but merely that they then worshipped the Sun: *Vos in die, quem dicunt solis, solem colitis.*

St Augustine speaks, too, of their keeping Easter<sup>1</sup>. It seems possible that this was only done in Christian countries, in accordance with their usual custom of conforming in outward matters, and we have no evidence of their doing anything of the sort in Turkestan.

Of the sacred books of the Manichaeans we hear much, although only one has survived to us in anything like completeness. Thus we hear from Al-Bîrûnî that the Manichaeans have a gospel of their own "the contents of which from the first to the last are opposed to the doctrine of the Christians," and this he says was called "the Gospel of the Seventy<sup>2</sup>." He also tells us of a book written by Manes himself called *Shapurakan* or *Shapurakhan* which was doubtless written for the edification of King Shâpûr or Sapor, the son of Ardeschîr, whose name it bears<sup>3</sup>. In this Manes seems to have described his own birth and his assumption of the office of heavenly messenger or "Burkhan," besides the saying as to the Burkhan before him, Zoroaster, Buddha, and Jesus, as described above<sup>4</sup>. We also hear from Al-Bîrûnî that he wrote a gospel arranged according to the 22 letters of the alphabet, which does not seem to be the same as the Gospel of the Seventy<sup>5</sup>, and we hear from other sources of a Book of the Giants, a Book of Secrets, a Book of Precepts, a Book of Lifegiving, and others, together with many letters or epistles all supposed to be by Manes' own hand<sup>6</sup>. As has been said, he and his followers rejected the Old Testament entirely, not indeed denying its inspiration, but declaring this to have come from the Evil Principle. Of the New Testament, Faustus, the Manichaean Perfect who disputed with St Augustine, puts the matter very clearly when he says :

"We receive only so much of the New Testament as says anything to the honour of the Son of Glory, either by Himself or by His apostles ; and by the latter only after they had become perfect and

<sup>1</sup> Aug. c. *Ep. Fundamenti*, c. 8 and de Stoop, *op. cit.* p. 27.

<sup>2</sup> Al-Bîrûnî, *Chronology*, p. 27.

<sup>3</sup> *Ib.* pp. 121, 190.

<sup>4</sup> A few other undoubted extracts from the *Shapurakhan* are to be found in Müller, *Handschriften-Reste*, *passim*, and others quoted at second hand from Mahommedan writers in Kessler, *op. cit.*, as to which see *ib.* pp. 180-191.

<sup>5</sup> Al-Bîrûnî, *op. cit.* p. 225.

<sup>6</sup> See Kessler, *op. cit.* p. 191 *sqq.*

believers. As for the rest, anything that was said by them either in their simplicity and ignorance, while they were yet inexperienced in the truth, or with malicious design was inserted by the enemy among the statements of truth, or was incautiously asserted by other writers and thus handed down to later generations—of all this we desire to know nothing. I mean all such statements as these—that He was shamefully born of a woman; that as a Jew He was circumcised; that He offered sacrifices like a heathen; that He was meanly baptized, led into the wilderness, and miserably tempted<sup>1</sup>.”

Thus it seems that the Manichaeans accepted only such facts of the Gospel narrative as did not conflict with their own doctrines, and although they are said to have had an especial veneration for St Paul, there is no reason to think that this extended to the writings of the Apostle to the Gentiles, or had any other motive than that of external conformity with the religion of those whom they were endeavouring to convert. As himself the Paraclete announced in the New Testament, Manes claimed for himself an authority superior to that of all apostles, and if he made use of any of the writings attributed to them, it was probably only in the shape of isolated passages divorced from their context. On the other hand, his followers seem to have made free use of apocryphal or pseudepigraphical books written in the names of the apostles and containing statements which could be explained as confirming Manes' teaching. A great number of these had as their common authors the names of St Thomas and St Andrew, and the Fathers declare that they were for the most part the work of one Leucius, whom they assert was a Manichaean<sup>2</sup>. It may be so; but, as all the copies of these works which have come down to us have been expurgated or, in the language of the time, “made orthodox,” by the removal of heretical matter, there is little proof of the fact.

More authentic, however, than these pseudepigrapha and much fuller than the extracts preserved by Christian or Mahom-

<sup>1</sup> Aug. c. *Faust.* Bk xxxii. c. 7.

<sup>2</sup> See Albert Dufourcq, *De Manichaeismo apud Latinos*, Paris, 1900, where all these apocrypha are carefully examined. The *Quo vadis* story appears on p. 40.

medan writers is a treatise found in the cave of the Thousand Buddhas at Tun-huang which has been published only last year. It seems by an extraordinary chance to have nearly escaped us, having been apparently missed by all the European expeditions because it was written in Chinese characters. Hence it was removed to Peking by orders of the Chinese Government under the impression that it was Buddhist in its nature, and has since been published in a Chinese publication founded for the purpose of preserving the Tun-huang MSS. by Mr Lo Tchen-yu, a Chinese scholar of great philosophical and archaeological attainments<sup>1</sup>. It is written on a continuous roll of paper over six metres in length, which has led unfortunately to the disappearance of the title and the first few words of the treatise. The remainder shows, however, that it purports to be a sort of allocution addressed by Manes, here as in the *Khuastuanift* called the "Legate of the Light," to Adda or Addas, whom we know from the Christian documents before quoted to have been one of the three great missionaries said to have been dispatched by Manes into foreign countries to propagate his doctrine<sup>2</sup>. Of these three, Thomas, Hermas, and Addas, the last-named is said to have been allotted "Scythia," which here as elsewhere doubtless means Turkestan, and his name therefore gives a reasonable air of authenticity to the text. The whole document is written in the form of a Buddhist *sutra*, and has been translated with an excellent commentary by the French Sinologist, M. Edouard Chavannes, with the help of M. Paul Pelliot, the leader of the French Expedition to Turkestan which probably first discovered it<sup>3</sup>. It entirely confirms the Mahommedan account of the teaching of Manes given above as well as that appearing in the *Khuastuanift*, and shows that St Augustine, alike in his authentic writings and in the tract *de Haeresibus* generally, although perhaps wrongfully, attributed to him, was drawing from well-informed sources. There are many grounds for thinking that it may originally have been written in Pahlavi, in which case it may have been

<sup>1</sup> Chavannes et Pelliot, *op. cit.* p. 508, and n. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Hegemonius, *Acta*, c. XIII. p. 22, Beeson.

<sup>3</sup> Chavannes et Pelliot, *op. cit.* 1<sup>ère</sup> ptie, pp. 399, 400.



contemporary with Manes himself; but it frequently makes use of Buddhist phrases often derived from the Sanskrit<sup>1</sup>. If the view here taken of the date of the original treatise is well founded, these may have been introduced by Manes during the time that the tradition mentioned above says that he spent in Turkestan for the elaboration of his doctrine. At all events they show that the practice of adapting his religion, as far as might be, to accord with that previously held by those among whom he was trying to make proselytes, goes back to the very origin of the sect.

This treatise was evidently written for edification rather than for instruction, and gives us a curious idea of the imagery by which the Manichaean teachers sought to enforce their teaching. The theory of the macrocosm and the microcosm, which teaches that the body of man is in itself a copy of the great world or universe, is here carried to excess<sup>2</sup>, and we hear much of the "trees" which certain demons, previously sticking to the elements, says the treatise, "like a fly to honey, a bird to bird-lime, or a fish to the hook<sup>3</sup>," plant in the soul to the corruption and ultimate death of the better desires there implanted by the Light. The combat waged against the diabolic vices by the virtues is also described with great minuteness, but in language in which it is sometimes difficult to discover whether the author is consciously using allegory or not. Thus he says that the Devil, to whom he attributes the formation of the body of man, "shut up the Pure Ether" (one of the five light elements)

"in the city of the bones. He established (there) the dark thought in which he planted a tree of death. Then he shut up the Excellent

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.* 1<sup>ère</sup> ptie, pp. 509, n. 5, 510, n. 2, 533, nn. 2 and 4.

<sup>2</sup> Nowhere is this curious theory, which forms the base of most Mediaeval Cabala and magic, more clearly stated. Thus the Tun-huang treatise says in describing the fashioning of the body of man by the devils (as in the Μέρος τευχῶν Σωτηριος), "there is not a single formation of the universe (or cosmos) which they did not imitate in the carnal body" (Chavannes et Pelliot, *op. cit.* 1<sup>ère</sup> ptie, p. 527); and in the next page "The demon... shut up the five natures of Light in the carnal body of which he made a little universe (microcosm)."

<sup>3</sup> Chavannes et Pelliot, *op. cit.* 1<sup>ère</sup> ptie, p. 514.

Wind in the city of the nerves. He established (there) the dark feeling in which he planted a tree of death. Then he shut up the strength of the Light in the city of the veins. He established (there) the dark reflection in which he planted a tree of death. Then he shut up the Excellent Water in the city of the flesh. He established there the dark intellect, in which he planted a tree of death. Then he shut up the Excellent Fire in the city of the skin. He established there the dark reasoning in which he planted a tree of death. The Demon of Envy [the name generally used in the treatise for the Devil] planted these five poisonous trees of death in the five kinds of ruined places. He made them on every occasion deceive and trouble the original luminous nature, to draw in from without the nature which is stranger to it, and to produce poisonous fruit. Thus the tree of the dark thought grows within the city of the bones; its fruit is hatred: the tree of the dark feeling grows within the city of the nerves; its fruit is irritation: the tree of the dark reflection grows within the city of the veins; its fruit is luxury [wantonness]: the tree of the dark intellect grows within the city of the flesh; its fruit is anger: the tree of the dark reasoning grows within the city of the skin; its fruit is folly. It is thus then that of the five kinds of things which are the bones, the nerves, the veins, the flesh, and the skin, he made a prison and shut up there the five divisions of the First Principle of Light....<sup>1</sup>"

and so on. One might sometimes think one was reading John Bunyan and his Holy War with its defence of the town of Mansoul.

Most of the information contained in this Pekin Treatise has been dealt with in its place, but there are one or two matters concerning the cosmology of Manes which are of importance as showing the connection of his system with that of his predecessors. One regards the two great angels, here called Khrostag and Padvaktag<sup>2</sup> or the Appellant and Respondent, who are mentioned in the *Khuastuani*ft (p. 343 *supra*) as bringing the

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.* pp. 528, 529.

<sup>2</sup> Their Chinese names are discussed by MM. Chavannes and Pelliot (*op. cit.* 1<sup>re</sup> ptie, pp. 521, n. 1, 542, n. 1, 543, nn. 1, 2, and 544, n. 1), wherein are gathered nearly all that can be said about them. The learned commentators decide that their functions still remain mysterious. But see next note *infra*.

light to be purified<sup>1</sup>. As has been said above, they show a great likeness to the two last Amshaspands of Zoroastrianism called Haurvetât and Ameretât; and like them are never mentioned separately, but always together<sup>2</sup>. Another point, already referred to, is that the Zoroastrian Sraôsha, the strong archangel who guards the world at night from the demons, is here mentioned several times by name<sup>3</sup>. Yet another point is that the two sexes are here said to have been formed by the devil out of jealousy and rage at beholding the sun and moon, and in imitation of the two luminaries. This is an entirely different story not only from those given above as Manichaean but from that given in the *Great Announcement* attributed to Simon Magus, and both differ from that told in the *Pistis Sophia*. It seems plain therefore that in attributing these various origins to the division of mankind into sexes, none of the three teachers was drawing upon tradition, but was merely inventing *ad hoc*.

There remains to be considered the history of the sect, as to which we have become better informed during the last few decades than at one time seemed possible<sup>4</sup>. Prohibited in the Roman Empire from the outset, they nevertheless made their way along both shores of the Mediterranean, and all the efforts of the Imperial authorities proved powerless to suppress them. Constantine directed an enquiry into their tenets, it is said, with some idea of making them into the religion of the State,

<sup>1</sup> W. Radloff, *Chuastuanift, das Bussgebet der Manichäer*, St Petersburg, 1909, pt 1. pp. 19, 20. Von Le Coq, *J.R.A.S.* 1911, p. 294: "when the Gods Kroshtag and Padwakhtag, the Appellant and Respondent, should have brought to us that part of the light of the Fivefold God that, going to God, is there to be purified." One is inclined to compare this with Jeû and Melchizidek receiving and purifying the light won from this world, or with Gabriel and Michael in the *Pistis Sophia* bearing the heroine upward out of Chaos; but the parallel may be accidental and is easily pushed too far.

<sup>2</sup> Like the "Twin Saviours" of the *Pistis Sophia*, whose functions are never even alluded to in that document.

<sup>3</sup> See notes 2 and 3, p. 327 *supra*.

<sup>4</sup> M. de Stoop's *Essai sur la Diffusion du Manichéisme* is most informing on this head. See also A. Dufourcq's Thesis quoted in n. 2, p. 351 *supra*. A very brief summary of the history of the sect was given by the present writer in *J.R.A.S.* 1913, pp. 69-94.

and although he found this impracticable or unsafe, he seems to have been at first inclined to extend to them toleration<sup>1</sup>. His successors, however, quickly reverted to the earlier policy of Diocletian, and law after law of gradually increasing severity was passed until adherence to Manichaeism was finally punished with death and confiscation<sup>2</sup>. Pagans like the Emperor Julian and his friend and teacher Libanius were able occasionally to intervene in their favour; but no sect was ever more relentlessly persecuted, and the institution of the Dominican Inquisition can be traced back to the *Quaestiones* set up by Justinian and Theodora for their routing out and suppression<sup>3</sup>. In the case of what was practically a secret society, it would be difficult to say whether the Imperial measures would have availed to entirely destroy their propaganda, and it is possible that the Manichaean Church always maintained a sporadic existence in Europe<sup>4</sup> until events to be presently mentioned led to its revival in the xth century. Meanwhile in the East, they remained on the confines of what was, up to the Mahommedan conquest in 642 A.D., the Persian Empire, and no doubt after their manner professed outward adherence to the Zoroastrian faith, while at the same time propagating their own doctrines in secret<sup>5</sup>. It

<sup>1</sup> For the enquiry by Strategius, afterwards called Musonianus, and Prefect of the East under Constantius, see Ammianus Marcellinus, Bk xv. c. 13. Cf. Neander, *Ch. Hist.* iv. 488 *sqq.* That the persecution instituted against them by Diocletian slackened under Constantine and Constantius, see de Stoop, *op. cit.* pp. 40, 41.

<sup>2</sup> See the Laws of Theodosius and Valentinian II, quoted by de Stoop, *op. cit.* pp. 41, 42.

<sup>3</sup> Gibbon, *Decline and Fall*, III. p. 153. Justinian put to death not only convicted Manichaeans, but those who being acquainted with members of the sect, did not denounce them. See de Stoop, *op. cit.* p. 43.

<sup>4</sup> The Manichaeans seem always to have been favoured by the better classes and high officials of the Empire who maintained for some time a secret leaning towards Paganism. See de Stoop, *op. cit.* p. 84. The case of Barsymès, the banker or money-changer whom Theodora made Praetorian Prefect, and who was allowed according to Procopius (*Anecdota*, c. xxii. 7) to profess Manichaeism openly, was doubtless only one of many. It is apparently this Barsymès who is invoked in the Turfan texts as "the Lord Bar Simus," see Müller, *Handschriften-Reste*, pp. 45, 59.

<sup>5</sup> That this was the professed policy of the sect seems plain from the words they attributed to Manes himself: "I am not inhuman like Christ

was probably the Arab conquest which drove them to make their headquarters on the very borders of the civilized world as known to the ancients and in what is now Turkestan. Here a large part of the population seems to have been Buddhist, doubtless by reason of its dealings with China, and in the presence of that gentle faith—whose adherents boast that they have never yet shed blood to make a convert—the Manichaeans enjoyed complete toleration for perhaps the first time in their history<sup>1</sup>. They made use of it, as always, to send out missionaries into the neighbouring countries, and certainly obtained a foothold in China, where the Chinese seem to have confused them with the Christians. Their hatred of images doubtless caused the iconoclastic Emperors of the East to enter into relation with them, and we hear that Leo the Isaurian induced many of them to enter the Imperial armies. It was possibly these last whom the Emperor John Tzimiskes settled in what is now Bulgaria, whence, under the names of Paulicians, Bogomiles, and other aliases, they promoted that movement against the Catholic Church which provoked the Albigensian Crusades and the establishment of the Dominican Inquisition in the West<sup>2</sup>. To follow them there would be to travel beyond the scope of this book; and it need only be said in conclusion that they formed the bitterest and the most dangerous enemies that the Catholic Church in Europe ever had to face. It was possibly this which has led the rulers of the Church of Rome to brand nearly all later heresy with the name of Manichaean; yet it may be doubted whether some of their doctrines did not survive in Europe until the German Reformation, when they may have helped to inspire some of the wilder Protestant sects of the xvth and xvith centuries. With the suppression of the Albigenses, however, the existence of Manichaeism as an organized faith comes to an end.

who said: Whoso denieth me, him will I deny. I say unto you: Whoso denieth me before man and saves himself by this falsehood, him will I receive with joy, as if he had not denied me." Cf. de Stoop, *op. cit.* p. 46, quoting Cedrenus; Al Birûnî, *Chronology*, p. 191.

<sup>1</sup> Von Le Coq, *Exploration Archéologique à Tourfan*, Confées au Musée Guimet (Bibl. de Vulg. t. xxxv.), 1910, p. 278.

<sup>2</sup> de Stoop, *op. cit.* pp. 86, 144.

## CONCLUSION

CONSTANTINE's accession proved to be, like the coming of Alexander, a turning-point in the history of the world. His so-called conversion put into the hands of the Catholic Church a weapon for the suppression of all rivalry, of which she was not slow to make use. Already in his reign many of the heathen temples were torn down<sup>1</sup>, and under the rule of his morose and gloomy successor, Constantius, the work of demolition went on apace<sup>2</sup>. The accession of the philosophic Julian gave the worshippers of other gods than Christ a short respite, and even allowed some of the temples destroyed in the former reigns to be restored by or at the expense of the Christians<sup>3</sup>. Julian's heroic death in Persia again threw the crown into the hands of a Christian emperor, whose reign of seven months gave him little time, as he perhaps had small inclination, for persecution<sup>4</sup>; but under his successors Valentinian and Valens, heathen sacrifices were forbidden under severe penalties. The end came under Gratian, when the temple estates were confiscated, the priests and vestals deprived of the stipends which they had hitherto received from the public treasury, and the heathen confraternities or colleges were declared incapable of receiving legacies<sup>5</sup>. Only a few rich men like the Vettius Agorius Praetextatus whom we have seen among the worshippers of Mithras, or the Quintus Aurelius Symmachus, whose learned

<sup>1</sup> Neander, *Ch. Hist.* III. pp. 34, 35.

<sup>2</sup> *Op. cit.* III. p. 46.

<sup>3</sup> Sozomen, *Hist. Eccl.* Bk v. c. 5, for instances. Cf. Neander, *op. cit.* III. pp. 66, 67.

<sup>4</sup> Neander, *op. cit.* III. p. 96.

<sup>5</sup> *Op. cit.* III. p. 100.

and patriotic life has been so well described by Sir Samuel Dill<sup>1</sup>, could henceforth venture to practise, even with maimed rites, the faiths condemned by the Court and the Church.

As for the Gnostic sects, which since Hadrian's time had striven with such success as we have seen to combine magic and other ancient beliefs with Christianity, they found but short shrift at the hands of the triumphant Church. By an edict issued by Constantine before his own reception into the Church, all their "houses of prayer" were confiscated for the benefit of the Catholic Church, their meeting even in private forbidden, and their books seized and burned<sup>2</sup>.

"Thus," says Eusebius, "were the lurking places of the heretics broken up by the emperor's command, and the savage beasts they have harboured (I mean the chief authors of their impious doctrines) driven to flight. Of those whom they had deceived, some, intimidated by the emperor's threats, disguising their real feelings, crept secretly into the Church. For since the law directed that search should be made for their books, those of them who practised evil and forbidden arts were detected, and these were ready to secure their own safety by dissimulation of every kind<sup>3</sup>."

Throughout the length and breadth of the Roman Empire all but a very few Roman nobles thus professed the faith of Christ. In the words of the dying Julian, the Galilaean had conquered.

From this time until our own, Christianity has reigned in the West with no serious rival. In the VII<sup>th</sup> century, when Mahommed's Arabs, flushed with the enthusiasm of a new faith which owed something at least to the relics of Gnosticism, poured in upon an Empire wearied out alike by perpetual war against the barbarians and by its own civil and religious dissensions, the Church was compelled to abandon to them her conquests in Africa and the East. In Europe, however, she continued in unchecked supremacy, gathering to herself and

<sup>1</sup> S. Dill, *Roman Society in the Last Century of the Western Empire*, pp. 143-166.

<sup>2</sup> Eusebius, *Vita Constantini*, Bk III. cc. 64, 65.

<sup>3</sup> *Op. cit.* c. 66.

assimilating the barbarians who at one time seemed likely to extinguish all civilization; and she thus became a bond uniting many nations and languages in one community of faith and thought. She even succeeded in keeping alive the remains of that Greek art and learning which still form our best and proudest intellectual possession, and if during her reign many of the precious monuments of antiquity perished, the fault was not entirely hers. In every respect, her rule was supreme; and such enemies as she had in Europe were those of her own household. The Manichaeans who, as has been said, once bid fair to deprive her of some of her fairest provinces, never dared to make open war upon her, and their secret defection was punished by an unsparing use of the secular arm. The German Reformation of the xvth century has probably left her stronger than before, and the few losses that she has suffered in the Old World have been more than compensated by the number of lieges she has succeeded in attaching to herself in the New.

In the days of her infancy, and before she thus came into her inheritance, Christianity borrowed much from the rivals over which she was in the long run to reign supreme. Her outward observances, her ritual, and the organization of her hierarchy, are perhaps all due to the associations that she finally overcame. The form of her sacraments, the periods of her fasts and festivals, and institutions like monachism, cannot be explained without reference to those religions from whose rivalry she so long suffered. That, in such matters, the Church should take what was useful to her was, as said above, part of her consciously expressed policy, and doubtless had much to do with her speedy triumph. To show that her dogmas also took many things from the same source would involve an invasion into the domain of professional theology, for which I have neither authority nor desire. But if, at some future time, investigation should show that in this respect also Christianity owes something to her forerunners and rivals, the argument against her Divine origin would not thereby be necessarily strengthened. That, in the course of her development, she acquired characteristics which fitted her to her



environment would be in strict conformity with the laws which appear to govern the evolution of all institutions; and if the Power ruling the universe chooses to work by law rather than by what seems to us like caprice, such a choice does not show Him to be lacking either in wisdom or benevolence.

As was said at the outset, everyone must be left to place his own interpretation on the facts here attempted to be set forth. But if, *per impossibile*, we could approach the study of the origins of Christianity with the same mental detachment and freedom from prejudice with which we might examine the worship of the Syrian Jupiter Dolichenus or the Scandinavian Odin, we should probably find that the Primitive Church had no need of the miraculous powers which were once assigned as the reason for her gradual and steady advance to all but universal dominion. On the contrary, it may be that Christianity would then appear as a link—although a most important and necessary link—in a regular chain of events which began more than three centuries before she emerged from her birth-place in Palestine into that Roman world which in three centuries more was to be hers of right. No sooner had Alexander's conquests made a world-religion possible, than there sprang up, as we have seen, in his own city of Alexandria, a faith with a far higher and purer idea of Divinity than any that had until then been known in the West. Then the germs already present in small fraternities like those of the Orphics and the Essenes blossomed forth into the fantastic and unwholesome growths, as we must needs think them, of that Gnosticism which marked the transition of the ancient world from Paganism to Christianity. Lastly there came in from the countries under the influence of Rome's secular enemy, Persia, the heresy of Marcion, the religion of Mithras, and the syncretistic policy of Manes and his continuators. Against all these in turn, Christianity had to struggle in a contest where the victory was not always on her side: and if in time she overthrew them all, it can only be because she was better fitted to the needs of the world than any of her predecessors or contemporaries.

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